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The children in the shadow.

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THE CHILDREN IN THE SHADOW

A derelict skillet is his ship and the only place he has to navigate it is the "mud gutter"

THE CHILDREN IN THE SHADOW

BY
ERNEST K. COULTER
Formerly Clerk of the Children's Court,
New York
Founder of the Big Brother Movement

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JACOB A. RIIS

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TO
H. L. C.

INTRODUCTION

"WHEN a child is arraigned in Court, there are always three delinquents, the child, the parent and the community. And the last is the worst sinner, for it let the slum grow that wrecked home and child alike."

That is the answer that comes from the Children's Court to the cry, "What of the night?"

It is well for us all that we had so faithful a watchman there. But Mr. Coulter does more than give warning of disaster; he knows the way out and he points us to it. Long years ago, at a gathering of serious men, when he had told of the sights he saw daily and the shamed question struggled to the surface: "Can nothing be done?" he was ready with the answer.

"Yes, be the neighbor! You are forty sitting here. If each of you were to be neighbor, brother, to one of these little ones and see him through, forty would be saved from shipwreck. It is not law the lad needs, but justice, the kind

of justice which only the brother can give — the love, the friendship, for which his life has been starving. All the rest will come on the trail of that." And that night forty entered the lists for the boy.

The forty have swelled into hundreds, and the Big Brother and the Little Brother have made the world a better place to live in. For they have helped us understand that "neighbor" is the pass-word that gets us over the hard places, and that nothing else will; not laws nor reforms, nor political platforms and propagandas. They are all ways of helping, but *the* way with the lad is neighborly friendship. A hand laid in kindness on his shoulder that shrunk just now from the copper's vengeful grip is more potent for his conversion than a term in the best reformatory that was ever planned, if there is one deserving of the name.

The man who has taught us this has a right to be heard, and what he tells us in these pages is well worth listening to. "No child is born vicious." In his soul is the image of God which the slum would crush out with "the environ-

ment that makes all for unrighteousness."

That at last we are bestirring ourselves to mend that environment is the chief claim of our day to be better than all that went before, and in that the share of Ernest K. Coulter has been no mean one.

FOREWORD

This is the story of the three delinquents, the child, the parent and the community, as it comes from the new but greatest social clinics in the world, the Children's Courts. In dealing with the child we deal with fundamentals; there is no mask, we get at real living conditions, the causes that lead him and his elders into conflict with society and the law.

It is often plain that the real culprit that should be arraigned is not the child, but the conditions that have brought him to court. We have too long counted property rights more sacred than human rights: "the tenements are more carefully safeguarded than are the dwellers in them, the traffic in the streets is more important than the little child who plays there because he has no other place." A century ago children were still being hanged on Tyburn Hill for larceny. Half a century ago we occasionally hanged a child in this country for murder. There were laws to protect the horse and the dog

from cruelty before the child had any real measure of protection. A dog or a horse could be sold, both had property value. But a man could still beat his child into a state of insensibility and thrust him into the streets to die while it was criminal for him to strike inhumanly his dumb brute. Until a good woman invaded a Hell's Kitchen tenement less than four decades ago and dragged to light a naked, half-dead little creature whose body was covered with the marks of the shears her guardians had used in torturing her, the public had been too busy, too selfish to think of laws for the prevention of cruelty to children. Then it was that Henry Bergh, who was the head of an animal society, and Elbridge T. Gerry organized the first society to protect children from cruelty. It is little more than a decade too, since communities generally ceased to arraign children in company with the city's outcasts, thieves and thugs. In the slow process of social evolution we are at last beginning to realize something of the potentialities of the child of to-day in the affairs of to-morrow.

The delinquent parent is a much more serious problem than the delinquent child. Our Children's Courts are proving that we can do with the latter practically as we please. Unless he is mentally defective it is chiefly a question of the right surroundings. The delinquent parent, however, is not of such plastic material. His habits are fixed, but he, like the child, is largely the product of environment.

And some of this environment we shall see. Believing that pictures are more potent than platitudes, the writer has frequently introduced them and assures his readers they are all actual scenes, a few of the thousands that have come under his observation. He has endeavored to make them as true as those of the photographer, who went about in the guise of a peddler, his street subjects all unconscious that concealed in the box he carried was a camera.

The community is the most culpable of the three delinquents; it is responsible for the environment. What has been set down here has been in the hope of further hastening its present rousing from its self-indulgent apathy.

In the Children's Courts appear most clearly all the wrongs and inequalities whereby organized society, selfish and therefore ignorant, warps, thwarts and denies the future citizen. If the child is not to grow up to become a public charge, to fill the charitable institutions, the hospitals, the prisons, he must have light and air and space. Every crowded, ill-ventilated tenement is a tax upon the future. Each, too, is a breeding place of parental as well as juvenile delinquency; for each the community is responsible. It has the right, the privilege, the power to correct these evils, but it has not been attending to the conduct of its own affairs. These matters, the massing of the population, the regulation of immigration, the hygienic conditions of the tenements, rents and wages have been left in the hands of those, who profiting by congestion and extortion, have been blind to the rights of our neighbor and his child. Our Children's Courts will do much to help the new awakening.

The writer has watched a great, sorrowful procession of one hundred thousand children pass before a single tribunal, which he helped

to organize and where for almost ten years he served continuously as an official. This may give him the right, perhaps, to record some of his observations with authority — observations of the three delinquents, the grist of the mills of greed and an awakening social conscience towards the children in the shadow.

For permission to use a few paragraphs from articles by him which have appeared in *The North American Review, The Outlook* and *The Delineator,* the author wishes to make grateful acknowledgment.

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THE CHILDREN IN THE SHADOW

The Children in the Shadow

CHAPTER I

THE PROCESSION

TWO little wanderers, ragged and forlorn, halted in front of a squat red brick building that stands at the entrance to the Bowery, the great gray way of New York. They studied its doors and windows, then climbed the stone steps. They sat there a moment, their frowsy heads together, in whispered conversation.

Suddenly they leaped to the middle of the sidewalk and began to pummel each other like mad. They punched and pounded, giving little heed to the gathering crowd; but they stopped now and then to glance at those doors and windows. Apparently no one on the inside was looking. They went at it again and finally their entwined little bodies went to the pavement in a squirming lump. And still they battered and punched until the nose of one was bloodied and the shirt of the other was lacking a sleeve. A great hand

was finally laid on the collar of each and they were dragged to their feet and through the portals of the old building. The policeman from the sidewalk tried the usual police grilling. It was answered with stolid silence. Then someone, who belonged in the building, and who better understood, tried gentler persuasion. The tears came and with them the story of cruelty and neglect.

These boys were brothers. There was no hatred between them. They had been driven from the place which custom would call home, by parents who wanted to be rid of them. They had been threatened with death if they returned, and the old marks of abuse that they bore on their bodies were an earnest of the treatment that awaited them if they went back. For three weeks they had passed their days foraging over the refuse heaps of the markets for food, their nights had been spent in the areaways, huddled close in an effort to keep warm. They could have gone to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and had shelter, had they known it.

This pair walked into the Children's Court one day and asked to be "put away." The father had disappeared, the mother had died a week before and they had been wandering the streets. They were sent to a good home in the country

In their wanderings, some lad told them of a place from which "bad" boys were sometimes sent away to homes where they would have to work hard, it was true, where they would have to be in bed early every night and where there was always someone watching them. But even their confused little minds were able to work it out that such a life would be much better than the one they were living. They decided, therefore, that they would "get took," as they called it.

But how to "get took" was the next question. The older brother had suggested, as he afterwards confessed, that "they hit a guy on de block wid a brick." The younger brother protested that "de guy" had never done them any harm. Which goes to show that even in the most neglected child there is a spirit of fair play and decency, a good material on which to work if the community will get at it before it is crushed out.

The boys starved and shivered for two more days and nights, and then the elder one suggested that they smash a jeweler's window and run away with a watch. But again the younger

boy demurred, this time offering a remedy of his own invention — that they go up under the very nose of the Court and fight each other until the police were forced to take them.

It is a pleasure to record that the parents of those boys were "took" too. When the black gowned Judge, who presided over the Children's Court, ordered that the father pay to the State exactly what it would cost to maintain these two youngsters in the good home to which they were sent or else go to prison, the man tore his beard in his rage and the mother screamed hysterically and had to be carried out of court.

This humane tribunal, one of the very recent products of a newly awakening public conscience, is one of the world's greatest centers of human interest. It was not the first Children's Court to be established, but it is the biggest. About 10,000 children are dealt with here each year, and here are revealed, as in no other way, the city's real living conditions. The cruelties of parents and of the community, the hopefulness and responsiveness of the coming citizens,

still in the formative period, are disclosed with startling vividness.

A little fellow, whose baggy trousers are held over his diminutive nakedness by a single suspender, his face chalky white and his eyes downcast, stands before the Judge, and he woefully rubs his stomach.

"What's the matter, Beans?" kindly inquires the Court.

Beans scarcely lifts his eyes and replies sadly:

"Me stumach's delirious, Mister."

When it is learned that Beans' sole diet for the past three weeks has been stale buns and water, the condition of his stomach is readily understood. It is not Beans' fault, nor that of his father; they were doing the best they could. They could live with little food, but they had to have a roof under which to do the sweatshop work. Three cents, the father told me, was the price he got for sewing satin linings in men's overcoats. When he worked hard he could make five dollars, and once in a great while when he sat up late nights, he made six dollars a week.

He used to make more when his wife and four children helped him, but the white death had taken her and all the children except Beans. The Court sends Beans to a good home in the country and the father goes back to his slavery.

"James Hennessy!" calls the clerk.

A door at the side of the crowded court-room opens. A little fellow, stunted and anæmic, trots out. He mounts a platform in front of the bench. He is scarcely able to keep his heavy eyelids open. Jimmy has been dragged out of a dry-goods box sometime between midnight and dawn by a big policeman who had found him fast asleep there. A hand is raised as a sign that the officer is to be sworn and Jimmy dodges. That is instinct, he has been dodging all his life. His whole existence has vibrated between hatred and fear.

The story is told in the usual stolid, policeman's way. There are a few formal phrases about "exposed and neglected" and "improper guardianship," all beyond Jimmy's ken. He is simply a cornered, cowering young animal. The gowned Judge in the big chair begins to talk

to him. The strange thing to Jimmy is, that he is neither being cursed at nor reviled. This man is speaking quietly, kindly. Jimmy knows little of church, but this must be the priest. There is a queer stirring within his stunted little being, a new pucker comes to his pinched face. His fists go suddenly to his eyes. Then, strangest of all, his grimy, tear-bedewed hand is taken gently by the gowned man. Jimmy looks fearfully into the man's eyes. He suddenly sees something there better than a bed, better even than the food he craved, a something for which he had dumbly starved, the first ray of human sympathy and kindness he has ever had in his whole gray little life.

And when James Hennessy, erstwhile of Corlear's Hook, steps out of the court he, too, goes into a good home and so is saved to the State. Jimmy had not been arrested for any offense he had committed; rather it was the offense of his parents who had deserted him months before and left him to shift for himself. This story is one of the commonest of the common stories of the ten thousand that annually come into court.

An Italian mother, an infant asleep on one arm, leads Giacomo by an ear before the Court. She takes the stand and after lifting her hand to high heaven and taking the oath, through an interpreter, volubly proceeds to swear her son's liberties away. There is no charge too black for Giacomo. She wants the boy railroaded to the *Collegio.* Giacomo, the culprit, the malefactor, stands patiently by. On a sudden the baby begins to wail. Giacomo, the outcast, patiently reaches into the pocket of his little jacket and brings out a feeding bottle. He mounts the stand, places the nipple in the crying infant's mouth and steps back to his place while the tale of his misdeeds flows swiftly on. The Justice brings his gavel down with a whack.

"Stop!" he commands, turning on the mother. "I have learned all that is necessary about Giacomo. I am convinced he is a good boy; you are simply trying to get rid of him. He will go home and you will take the best care of him. You will be watched; Giacomo himself will come back in two weeks and tell me how you are treating him!"

So Giacomo, patient and long suffering, goes back to his old job of nursing the baby, but under new auspices. With the Court taking hold that home will be straightened out, and the boy may get the chance that has until now been denied him.

A frightened urchin of ten, who had run off with a pair of shoes that were hanging in front of a store, climbs up before the bench. A worn, anxious mother, who sees him now for the first time since he was taken into custody, lays a trembling hand on his arm. Care and the marks of drudgery are on her face. She is a scrub-woman and has a family of five that the father has deserted. The little fellow's eyes fill.

"Judge, I took 'em for me little sister," he quavers.

The sister is there, two years younger than the defendant. She shows her sympathy by holding his hand and patting him on the cheek. The stolen shoes are produced and, sure enough, they are about Emma's size and Emma's toes are showing. From some unknown source the price of those stolen shoes is dropped into the com-

plainant's hand and he leaves court, grumbling in his beard. A member of one of the charitable committees constantly in attendance at Court becomes interested and, following the boy's arrest and arraignment, things will look up in that home. In days before Children's Courts were established and boys and girls of tender years were still being tried at a bar with grown criminals, this lad might have been hurried off to a reformatory with the danger of being contaminated by hardened offenders or else turned into an automaton.

Then comes one of that sleek, suave, well groomed type, physically well-off but morally ruined, a boy pickpocket. He is charged with having taken her week's wages from the handbag of a working girl. The plain clothes man saw him open the clasp of the bag in crowded Grand Street, and after getting the pay envelope, quickly pass it to a companion. The boy stoutly denies his guilt and his ready tongue offers a plausible story of how he was simply passing at the time and the detective got him by mistake. He has already been in a reformatory

for a "larceny from the person" and the Judge knows him and his class thoroughly. There is nothing for it but to send the boy back to the House of Refuge. There is little chance that he will come out honest, for the pickpocket is the one almost hopeless child. For the protection of the community, however, and that of the other boys of his neighborhood, it is necessary to isolate him. Even though he knows he is to be sent away he refuses absolutely to tell of the men who have trained him and who have been profiting even more than himself by his thievings. The desire in the Children's Courts is not to send children to institutions but to keep them with their parents if that is at all possible. The commitment of some children, however, is absolutely necessary, to save them either from undesirable homes or from themselves. So it is that only about one-fifth of all the children arraigned in the New York County Children's Court are sent either to charitable or reformatory institutions.

A tawny haired, brazen faced, overgrown girl of fourteen is called. A ragged band of crepe has ostentatiously been tied to a sleeve of

her jacket. The complaint reads that this girl is in danger of becoming morally depraved. She has been frequenting low dance halls and moving picture places and has often been away from home all night "without her parents' consent." Not that this last would make much difference. They are worthless people and have not even taken sufficient interest to be in court. Lizzie, the agent says, is a menace to the neighborhood. There are so many menaces in her neighborhood that it is doubtful if one more or less would make a great deal of difference to the children there. But Lizzie's own future is to be thought of. When the agent finishes his story and after the Judge has looked at the record, he turns to the girl.

"I understand that you smoke cigarettes."

Lizzie is sullen and defiant.

"Show me your hand," demands the Court.

Lizzie readily puts up her left hand.

"No, your right is the one I want to see," quietly observes the Judge.

The girl reluctantly holds forth her right hand for inspection. The Judge carefully examines

the fingers. Yes, the tell-tale stains are there.

Now Lizzie is ready to talk. Here's a chance for her imagination and the skilful deceit that she has been employing so much of late.

"Say, Judge, do you know Mrs. Rose who lives in our house?"

The Court has not the honor of Mrs. Rose's acquaintance.

"Well," continues Lizzie, nothing disconcerted, "Mrs. Rose, she fell down steps last week and sprained her ankle and I had to paint it with iodine." She has other explanations quite as ingenious and ready when the Judge questions her about her misdeeds. The Court is familiar with such stories and it all winds up, at least for the present, with Lizzie's being sent away to a reformatory for girls. The time is indefinite but she will probably be out in a year and a half or two years; then there will be another chapter. The question is if it will do Lizzie any good. In the reformatory where she is going there are many girls worse than herself. There are no cottages, nor opportunity for segregation by groups, a plan that is wisely being

followed in the newer institutions. No matter how rigid the discipline nor how persistent the religious instruction there will be companionship and conversation with other girls whose knowledge of evil is wider than Lizzie's. She has been a product of bad conditions; will the new environment help her?

Another girl, a frail creature physically and morally, the victim of a vicious mother, is arraigned. The child wears silk stockings and when the agent took her he found her cheeks painted. There is no suggestion of that now, for the tears have washed it off. As the weeping child is led away she looks reproachfully at her flashily dressed mother.

"Never mind, Florence," is the consolation the mother calls back, "the lower you fall, the higher you'll bounce."

Would there be any punishment too severe for a parent like this? And yet this mother walks out of court scot-free. There are laws dealing with the impairment of the morals of children, but they are totally inadequate as relating to parents.

Two little girls whose fair faces, dainty frocks, and be-ribboned braids mark them in sharp contrast to the array of children still to be called before the Judge, are arraigned for breaking into a house and stealing a quantity of jewelry. Were they adults the charge against these two would be burglary. But in the recent awakening to a consciousness of our duty toward the child, and with the adoption of saner methods of dealing with child offenders, they are no longer branded as criminals in this court. When they are under sixteen and the offense is less than murder, they are charged with juvenile delinquency; or, if they have not committed an actual offense themselves, but are in court because they have been neglected or cruelly treated by their parents, the charge is improper guardianship. In broad daylight these two little girls — they are all of twelve — have climbed a fire escape to the sixth story and with a poker forced an entrance to an apartment. It develops that the window had been very insecurely fastened, otherwise their small strength would not have enabled them to

open it. One had stood guard on the fire escape while the other entered. This was really a needless precaution because they knew their neighbors were gone for the day. The little girl who entered passed through rooms with which she was familiar — the people they were robbing were friends of her family — and went directly to a dresser drawer from which she took a jewel box. She emptied the contents into a black bag which the children had made especially for this occasion. On returning to the fire escape she passed the bag to her waiting companion, and the latter ascended by the fire escape to the roof. The little girl who had actually taken the jewelry remained behind to close the window and cover the retreat, then the child burglars joined forces on the housetop. They crept from chimney to chimney, peeked over ledges, and made their "get-away" apparently with all the care of trained house breakers. They reached an open scuttle through which they gained the stairway and finally the street, some doors away from the house they had robbed. Soon they were distributing rings and trinkets to wonder-

ing playmates who gathered around them.

These little girls — these infants engaging in a bold burglary that had been carried out after most careful thought and preparation — had good homes, apparently, and the whole affair was so incongruous that it caused the Court to marvel. The dramatic element was so conspicuous, and the talk of the children so ingenuous that the Court decided there must be a careful probing to reach the inspiration of the plot. While the children evinced actual pride in the details of their burglary they were absolutely silent as to how the notion was put into their small heads.

The two are finally remanded to the custody of the Society until an investigation can be made. After several days the agents discover that the father of one of the little girls is, in addition to his regular business, the silent partner in a moving picture show, and that his daughter has had free access to this exhibition. She has been spending a large part of her out-of-school hours there and has always taken the other little girl with her. They have witnessed a picture drama of the nickel novel type, called "The Great

Diamond Robbery," until all its details have taken firm hold on their receptive imaginations. The actors in this criminal adventure have become their heroes. It was the daughter of the moving-picture man who proposed that they plan and carry out a robbery of their own. The desire has not been for gain, but to do something dramatic and exciting — it was a form of play. By a strange fate, it had been his own child that the moving picture man was leading into criminal acts, through the low class of pictures showing in his place. Other children, too, had doubtless come under the harmful influence.

The evil effects of the moving pictures in which crime is shown are often apparent in the Children's Courts. It has not been long since a group of boys, who tried to wreck an express train, confessed that the crime was suggested by such exhibitions. As to the two little girls, they are doing splendidly to-day; it is needless to say that the father of the one has given up the moving-picture business. The educational value of moving pictures is fast being recognized, but many communities are still strangely de-

linquent in not providing proper municipal supervision for such places.

A smartly dressed youngster in knickerbockers, who wheeled up to the Court with his father in a big red automobile, is charged with having broken a street lamp. The boy was arrested the evening before, but was released on the father's promise to produce him the next morning. By a wise provision of law, the parent of any child who has been arrested for an offense, which in an adult would not amount to a felony, can thus obtain the child's release over night pending his arraignment in the Children's Court. The Judge, who in this common sense court is prosecutor, judge and jury combined, calls Robbie to him. The self-important father thrusts out a card with a Murray Hill address engraved upon it and would push past the attendant to reach the Judge. The Judge motions to the officer to keep the father outside the rail.

"Did you break the lamp?" asks the Court.

"Yes, sir," is the boy's straightforward response, and it does the heart of the Court good.

Robbie's father fumes. The boy's honesty enrages him. Such truthfulness will never do for Robbie in business!

"What do you say that for? You know you did not do it!"

The Judge looks at Robbie's elder in disgust. He has the boy removed from earshot, and orders the father brought before him. The Court does not wish to humiliate Robbie by the things he is going to say.

"Your boy has been manly enough to tell the truth, and yet you, his father, think so little of him that you would have him come into a court of law and tell a lie. The fact that he has acted in such a manly way is solely to his own credit. There will be a parole in this case, but it will not be the boy who is on probation. Unless you can do better for him it will be necessary for the Court to take him away. Your boy is still a splendid, manly fellow, but we must protect him."

Robbie is again called before the Judge. The lesson of the bigger the crowd, the less the rights of the individual, is now explained to the

Here is apparent the effect of wholesome country life on children of six different nationalities who had been removed from the sordid tenements

boy in terms he can understand — there must be laws in crowded places, for the good of all, that are not necessary in the country. The street lamp was broken in a game of ball, there was no malicious intent in the boy's mind, it was an accident. The Court wishes there was something like adequate play space for the city's children. Very often does the Court express this wish to the thousands of children brought before it, upon like charges, the children to whom the city in effect forbids the right even to play.

A youngster, the single captive in a police raid on a street game of "One-O'-Cat," was brought to the Court in a state of terror. He sat in a far corner of the detention room, his face wet with tears and trembling like a leaf. In the eyes of the other boys, most of them there on charges far more serious, he was an object of scorn. They called him a "Molly" and a "dope."

He suddenly stopped crying, wiped his eyes with his shirt sleeve, and then committed an unpardonable act — he slipped from the bench,

fell on his knees, and, unmindful of all the lads around him, started to pray:

"Please, O God, don't let them send me to prison. I'll never play ball again!"

What a sad, wretched pledge for a normal boy!

And so the pathetic procession moves on. These are but a few typical pictures that show some of the ailments of the child, the parent, and the community, as revealed in this greatest of all social clinics. Through the sane and humane methods employed the vast majority of the children brought into court are saved to useful citizenship. A study of the figures for one period of six years showed that only eight per cent. of the children arraigned here came back a second time. As has already been said, it has been necessary to commit to institutions only about one-fifth of those arraigned. The Children's Courts have often been called the "Courts of one more chance." The parole and probation system, although yet in its infancy and still far from perfect, has worked such excellent results that rarely in any one year have more than ten per cent. of the children released under its super-

vision failed to make such good progress that it has been unnecessary finally to commit them to institutions.

The litigation in most courts turns on money. These child's tribunals concern themselves with a prize of greater worth — the citizenship of to-morrow. They are great life-saving stations.

And yet with all these good results there are communities to-day still so blind, so selfish, that they are locking up the children in company with thugs and murderers. Only recently in visiting a jail in a Southern city I found a child of thirteen imprisoned in the same pen with about thirty tramps, thieves and desperadoes. Here within the shadow of the gallows — for looking out the grated window, we could see its grim structure — this boy had been confined for weeks because he had ridden off on another lad's bicycle. There are many communities in which children of tender years are still languishing in jail — this with all our boasted Twentieth Century spirit of humanitarianism.

In addition to what Children's Courts are doing directly for the child, they are destined to be

of tremendous service in improving the social conditions of the entire community. For here daily loom up evils that must speedily be overcome if we are to have regard for to-morrow's wholesome citizenship. In these Children's Courts stand out most vividly the menace of the further overcrowding of the already inhumanly congested tenement districts, the wretchedness growing out of a practically unregulated immigration, the poverty and the public charges produced by the landlord's uncontrolled greed, the human sacrifices to tenement speculation, the wholesale desertion of families by irresponsible parents, and all the forms of parental delinquency. There are crime, poverty, ignorance and neglect on the one side, fostered by the State's blind selfishness, and on the other to combat them properly there must be a new awakening to reason and humanity. There are remedies at hand and we must use them.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW LIFE-SAVING STATIONS

OUR Children's Courts are laying bare as they were never revealed before those living conditions that not only are contaminating the child, but that too often transform our grown neighbor into an enemy against society. The child heretofore has been amenable to the State; the day is coming when the State will be amenable to the child. The purpose here is not a technical discussion of the procedure of our Children's Courts but rather a consideration of certain living conditions revealed through them. As some readers, perhaps, have but vague notions as to the origin and functions of these tribunals for children, a few words regarding their development may not be amiss.

In the slow process of social evolution, the rights of the child have been the last to be recognized. We have been more concerned about

property rights than we have about human rights. The child being the weakest member of the community, has been the last to come into anything like his own. A century ago, as we have seen, they were still hanging children on Tyburn Hill for larceny. In fact, in 1756, a child was beheaded because he stole a shawl and his head was set on a paling, as a warning to other children not to steal. Lord Edward Thurlow, Lord Chancellor of England, declared in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, that the child was the ward of the State, but it was more then one hundred years before that idea took hold to the extent of enabling child delinquents really to come under Chancery jurisdiction. A half century ago we still occasionally hanged a child for murder in this country. How jealous our courts are of their jurisdiction and what difficulties beset any attempt to improve their archaic procedure! Children who have offended against the law — yes, and those whose only sin has been to have a drunken or brutal parent — have until very recent years been locked in jails and felons' cells to await the State's disposition of their

cases. Men failed utterly to realize that these children were usually the victims of bad environment; that they were a plastic material whose future the community could mold as it pleased. No, these children were herded with murderers, thieves and tramps, and thus the righteous community bred criminals. The State of Massachusetts in 1863 did pass a law intended to separate the child under the age of sixteen years in court from the adult charged with crime. But little or no attempt was made to enforce it, and, after a time, it became a dead letter.

Another law was passed some years later, which provided that juvenile offenders should be tried separately from adults charged with crime "at suitable times which shall be designated therefore by the Police District and Municipal Courts, and shall be called the session for juvenile offenders for which a separate docket and record shall be kept." This law, except as it was applied in Boston, was not enforced until within a very few years.

Women have forced most of our steps toward humanitarian progress. Possibly this is because

the men are so busy with the bread winning that they do not have time to think of these things. The organization of the first society for the prevention of cruelty to children was due to the efforts of a good woman, who saw that children were often being beaten, starved and outraged by cruel parents and guardians, while the State looked on with apathy. It was a fortunate day for suffering childhood the world over, when Mrs. Etta A. Wheeler went into a Hell's Kitchen tenement in New York in 1874, to minister to a woman who was dying of tuberculosis. The sound of blows and a child's cries came from the room adjoining that in which the dying woman lay. The sufferer turned to her visitor:

"You cannot save me but you can save that child and that will give me a peaceful death."

Mrs. Wheeler tried to go to the rescue, but her way was barred and her pleas were answered with curses. She went to the police; they turned a deaf ear. The magistrates to whom she applied shook their heads. They were sorry but they could issue no warrant unless there were eye witnesses to the assaults. She turned to

some of the leading citizens, so called. They threw up their hands aghast. The idea of interference between parent and child! — it was not to be heard of. That, too, reflected the attitude of the world as late as 1874. But the cries of that child rang in the ears of Mrs. Wheeler; she could not sleep. She had heard of Henry Bergh, who had organized a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. In desperation she turned to him.

Mr. Bergh consulted with Elbridge T. Gerry, who was counsel for that society, and together they scanned the statutes for a law under which it was possible to proceed. They searched in vain. They finally decided that if the law did not give the child the protection that God intended for every human being, they would give the child the protection the law accorded the brute. The child belonged in the animal kingdom, and on that broad construction they were about to send an officer of the animals' society into the tenement, when Mr. Gerry succeeded in obtaining from a Supreme Court Judge in chambers a writ of *habeas corpus*. When the

door of the miserable tenement room was forced, an eight-year-old girl was found shrinking and shivering in a corner. She was naked except for the rags of a tattered calico skirt. Her wan, pinched face was a mass of unhealed cuts and bruises. The scars which covered her arms and body told of repeated assaults. On her legs were long abrasions still fresh which had been inflicted with a pair of heavy scissors.

Mary Ellen was the child's name, and that name is to-day famous in humanitarian history. She had been abandoned by her parents, was cared for by a charity society for a time, and then adopted by a family of the name of Connolly. She was never allowed to play with other children. Her only food was scraps from a scanty table. Her foster mother was in the habit of beating her every day, either with a twisted rawhide whip or the shears, and for no reason other than a perverted satisfaction she got from seeing the child suffer. For lack of other clothing, the officer wrapped Mary Ellen in a horse blanket and then carried her to a waiting carriage.

A great public clamor started when the child was laid before the judge in court. Jacob A. Riis, who was one of the pioneers in the work for the betterment of children, and who with his masterful pen and untired labors has perhaps done more for humanitarian progress than any other one man, was there that day. The reader has perhaps followed him in one of his own books through that dramatic scene in court. Men looked on that bruised, beaten body of the half-starved child and wondered that they had been so long blind. They realized that there had been thousands of Mary Ellens, yes, hundreds of thousands of them. Elbridge T. Gerry, Henry Bergh and John D. Wright, the Quaker philanthropist, at once began the organization of the first society for the prevention of cruelty to children. A law drafted by Mr. Gerry was enacted in 1875, which gave this society the right to prefer complaints before any court or magistrate in any matter relating to or affecting children. Two years later came another law which prohibited that any child under the age of sixteen who was under restraint or conviction, should

be locked up with adults charged with or convicted of crime. Some States, as we have seen, are still permitting this. The parent society in thirty-eight years of its existence handled in New York City alone, cases of 218,715 children. There is scarcely a civilized community of considerable size in the world to-day that does not have a similar organization.

Three pictures hang in the directors' room of the New York Society to-day, one of Mary Ellen, as she was when rescued from the Hell's Kitchen tenement, the other of her to-day, surrounded by a happy family of her own, for she became the wife of a prosperous up-State farmer, and the third, that serene face of Etta A. Wheeler, the savior of not only Mary Ellen but of multitudes of other children who would have suffered endless brutality and even death, but for her insistence that the child, too, had some rights.

Really effective laws establishing separate tribunals for children came as the result of a much later awakening to a new consciousness of the community's duty to the child. Now that the Children's Courts movement has become so

widespread, several cities have laid claim to credit for their origin. Judge Ben B. Lindsey, who has been in the forefront in the fight for children's rights and who took up his great work in Denver in 1901, has frequently been called the "father of the Children's Court." He disclaims that distinction and says: "So much through so many earnest souls has gone to make up our present system of children's laws that no single individual can well be so credited."

It is an institution that has developed from the tardy workings of many minds along new lines. In my investigations of the subject I have learned that there were a number of humane and sensible magistrates and judges who, without the authority of any special statute, but guided solely by their sense of the fitness of things, held the hearings of children brought before them separate from adults at least ten years before the first separate courts for children were established by law. This is true of some of the magistrates in the smaller cities of New England and particularly in Connecticut.

While larger cities have been busy claiming

credit for the first effective Children's Court laws, the modest little city of Providence, R. I., seems to have been hiding its light under a bushel. The Grand Jury in the County of Providence, R. I., in October, 1896, found that several children had been locked in the county jail for weeks during the summer recess of court. One of them, a small boy, was there because he had stolen something from a bakery, probably a pie. He and other children, who were merely witnesses, had been herded behind the bars with the lowest types of criminals. The Grand Jury, when this was reported by James Snow, Jr., Michael J. Harson and others of its members, awakened with a start. They presented a memorial to the Common Pleas Division of the Supreme Court, in the course of which they said:

> We have had several cases before us in which the parties charged with crime were very young persons and in which the witnesses were very young also. We believe that great and permanent injury may be done to the future of young boys and girls by dragging them before a Grand Jury in the same docket with a large number of serious and grave crimes, committed in many instances by notorious

criminals. We further believe that the ends of justice are not best served by bringing such young persons for trial before an ordinary session of the Court under similar conditions of association with crime and criminals. We believe such a course can result only in the gravest injury to their whole future lives.

We therefore beg this Honorable Court to recommend to the Legislature that some provision be made for the separation of juvenile cases from adult cases; that the former be brought before the Grand Jury in special session, and further that such cases be tried before a special session of the Court to be known as a Juvenile Court, for the trial of such offenders.

This Court, like all other human institutions since the beginning, hesitated at any radical departure from the deeply worn rut of procedure. The presiding Justice in responding to the memorial, spoke of the impropriety of the Court volunteering advice to a coördinate branch of the Government. The Court and the legislature bowed and scraped back and forth for about two years, while the herding of children with criminals continued. But women took up the fight and they, after enlisting the aid of a number of prominent men, won the legislature over in 1898 to passing

a law providing for the separate arraignment and trial of children in the Counties of Providence and Newport, and, as they had been named in the old Massachusetts law, designated the separate sessions as the "Sessions for juvenile offenders."

The law also provided for a separation of children from adults in custody. An amendment passed the following year that extended this law to every county in the State.

The proposition to create a special court for children in Chicago in 1899 was derided as the "foolishness of a lot of women and other long-haired cranks." The same cry has been set up against most steps for human betterment. It was heard when someone first dared to denounce the hanging of children on Tyburn Hill for crimes against property. It has been used effectively in blocking legislation by those who have thrived on child labor. Practically all of the laws for the regulation and restriction of child labor have been enacted since the National Child Labor Committee was organized, and that is within the past decade. But "sentimental-

A cast-off barrel must serve as a horse. The ingenuity of the street children is often taxed to find means of play

ity" prevailed and Chicago got its Children's Court.

There were two preludes to the actual establishment of separate courts for children in New York. The first, in 1893, when Joseph M. Deuel, then a magistrate, decided on his own initiative to hold all hearings of children's cases in a room apart from the police court. But jurisdictional barriers were met that could not be overcome and the plan was finally abandoned. Thomas Murphy, a Buffalo magistrate, on his own responsibility opened a court for children in 1899, in a building occupied in part by the county morgue. That was the only place, so the city declared, that was available, but Judge Murphy decided that the atmosphere of a morgue was not as dangerous to children as that of the ordinary police court. The District Attorney of New York County and a cohort of defenders, went flying to Albany in 1901 to guard the sacred rights of the State constitution against invasion, when a bill drafted by Judge Deuel was introduced in the legislature, to provide for a separate court for children in New York City. Among the oppo-

nents to the bill were men who were regarded as able jurists, but the women saved the day again and with the result that the court was opened in the following year.

The branding of an eight-year-old girl as a "Protegé of Crime" and the fact that she was sentenced to an institution where she came into contact with older persons steeped in immorality, set the women of Philadelphia to work, under the leadership of Mrs. Hanna Kent Schoff, to bring about a different condition. The child in this particular case had been motherless since she was two years old, was an inmate of an orphanage, and later a drudge in a boarding house, with no companionship, except that of ignorant servants. She set fire to a house, and when she was asked why she did it, replied: "To see the engines run." This child was tried in a criminal court with all the formality that would have attended the trial of an adult murderer. After the girl had been committed to a reformatory where there were older girls who had been convicted of all sorts of offenses, Mrs. Schoff remonstrated with the Judge. He said there was no

other place to send her and that "they did not want her there because of the character of her offense." The child was finally removed from the reformatory — rescued we might properly say — and placed in a good, private home. Some years ago I knew that she had developed into a sweet, attractive girl, who was loved by all who came into contact with her. To make sure that the "hopeless little criminal," as she had been called when first taken into custody, was still filling a useful place, I wrote to Mrs. Schoff recently and asked for the subsequent record. Her reply is as follows:

"The girl who was considered hopeless is to-day a graduate of one of our State normal schools, Assistant Principal of a large school, took the prize in Bible study, and is in every way a useful and good woman."

Five hundred children ranging in age from six to sixteen years had been confined in the Philadelphia County Prison in the enlightened year of our Lord 1900. The original Children's Court law that the Philadelphia women succeeded in having passed, was declared unconstitutional.

But another law that passed later has withstood all attacks.

To take up the history of each Children's Court in turn would be impracticable, for within the past few years all of the larger cities have established these tribunals which are based on humanity and common sense. A sketch of the development of the Children's Court in Indianapolis under Judge Stubbs would, for instance, furnish material for a chapter in itself. And as we said in the beginning, the intention here is not to discuss Children's Courts in themselves, but rather the living conditions that they reveal.

Each court has its own methods suited to the particular needs of the community in which it is established. No Children's Court is perfect as no individual and no human institution can be perfect. These courts are in their infancy, and there is no city that yet has an ideal Children's Court. That is for the future, but, as we shall see, they are already beginning to be great factors in educating the community to new responsibilities to our neighbor and his child.

CHAPTER III

THE CRADLES OF DELINQUENCY

"A body that don't get started right when he's young ain't got no show."— *Mark Twain* in "Huckleberry Finn."

IN your journeyings up and down the city did you ever leave the beaten track and look in on some of our neighbors? Unless we have we know nothing of the causes of the delinquency. Reading about poverty and congestion in books is one thing, seeing it face to face is another. Unless we see for ourselves how in the densely packed districts, the community robs children and parents of the elemental things, light, air, space, we have neglected our duty as citizens.

Nature intended every child to have a fair start. No child is born vicious and at birth nearly all are physically sound. The sensibilities of society have been touched of late by the idea of exposing its members to tuberculosis. But there are other destructive forces which sap the

community's moral vitality quite as surely as tuberculosis undermines its physical strength and to which the dwellers in the tenements are inevitably exposed. We are just beginning to realize that "in caring for all its children the State is simply caring for itself." In other words, we are beginning to rouse from our social irresponsibility. We may have self-indulgently lulled ourselves into a complacent belief that there is a great separation between ourselves and our neighbors of the tenements. The only barrier between us in truth is that built by our own ignorance, which, perhaps, should be spelled — selfishness. If the "emptiness of ages" does sit on our neighbor's face, if the life of his child is early snuffed out, or, surviving malnutrition and neglect, his child reaches criminal ways, the responsibility is chiefly ours. Why? you ask; because we do not see to it that our neighbor gets his opportunity for life, the opportunity to which all are entitled.

A puny culprit, who had forced and entered a store at night, stood before the Judge in the Children's Court. When the case of The People

was proved beyond doubt, the Judge turned to the lad.

"Did you ever hear of God?" he asked.

The prisoner thought hard, then faltered:

"I've heard me mudder and de boys in de street."

The name of the Supreme Being he had heard only in blasphemy.

The mother of this boy, it was later learned, had once poured a teakettle full of boiling water on his bare legs. That was but one of the many cruelties he had suffered and the marks of which he carried on his thin body. The home of the boy was in "The Ink Pot," a black habitation in one of the packed districts. With such environment there was little wonder that this lad was in a fair way of becoming a criminal. That was several years ago and, thanks to the Court's efforts and the wholesome surroundings into which the boy was transplanted, he has developed into a useful young man. Just as long as it tolerates the "Ink Pots" and the thousands of other black and miserable holes that serve for human dwellings, so long will society be responsible for chil-

dren who go wrong. The vast majority of human beings, whether children or grown-ups, naturally possess kindly, lovable, and decent tendencies. It is the thwarting of these by the community's neglect that leads to so many arraignments in the Children's Courts.

No matter how vicious and depraved are his parents, when a child enters the world he is pure and innocent. In bad surroundings physical deterioration manifests itself at once. Before there can be any effect morally the child must for a time have survived these physical conditions. He must have attained to some degree of understanding before moral contamination can touch him. The child is no more responsible when bad surroundings do begin to take effect than he is for the anæmia he suffers because of malnutrition and physical neglect. One English authority, who made an extensive investigation in the tenements, in connection with the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, declares that whatever the antecedent condition of the parents, ninety per cent. of the children are healthy when born. Eminent obstetricians in

this and other countries give the same testimony. But life is correspondence with environment. The influence of heredity has long served as a thought of refuge for many respectable persons who want to shirk responsibility to their neighbors. It has been so easy to say: "Oh, well, his father was bad; what could you expect?" And it is fortunate we are at last learning that a boy need not necessarily be vicious because his father or mother did not have a spotless record. What a hopeless world it would be if that theory held good! A great humorist once declared that if we all went far enough back we would find a gallows rampant in the family tree.

To-day we are even regarding that frayed-out old case in criminology, the Jukes case, in a new light. Had there been a sane method of dealing with the first generation of Jukes the State would have been spared that million and a quarter of dollars spent in seventy-five years for the punishment of criminals and the maintenance of paupers all belonging to this family, and it also would have escaped all the volumes of pessimism of which they formed the subject. The old con-

struction placed on the case was that merely because the original stock was criminal, all the succeeding branches were criminal also. But we now see that the source of all this line of law breakers and paupers did not lie in criminality but in feeble-mindedness. It is feeble-mindedness that is hereditary and not criminality. On the other hand defectiveness often leads to criminality. Had there, for instance, been some special institution where Max Jukes, the progenitor of that family of 900 persons, could have received special medical attention and care there would not have been the widespread mental, moral, and physical disaster that this degenerate family caused. The ratio of pauperism among them was nearly eight times as great as in the whole population.

But the vast majority of delinquent children are not mentally defective; their delinquency is due for the most part to their surroundings, and for that the community is responsible. In looking back over the ranks of the children that I have seen pass through the Children's Court there are few — except the mentally defective —

who stand out as showing that a vicious parent necessarily means a vicious child. But there are cases without number going to prove that while a child's antecedents have been vicious and depraved in the extreme, the boy or girl can, with proper help, rise superior to the line and be safely set upon the road to useful citizenship.

Into a sodden, smoke-clouded room in the rear of an East Side saloon there staggered, early one morning some years ago, a drunken mother, leading her shrinking thirteen-year-old daughter. They had been dispossessed from their one room and had been tramping the streets. The mother dragged the child from table to table in the saloon.

"Ain't she a fine young 'un?" she inquired as she passed from group to group.

Some of the men set down their glasses and reviled the pair for disturbing them and some gazed evilly at the child who was comely despite lack of food and sleep. The mother finally climbed upon a table and hanging to a post to steady herself began to auction off her daughter. "I'm going to sell her to the highest bidder," she

declared; the girl tugged at her skirts and the mother struck her a blow in the face.

"I can't have her tagging around with me, but she's a good 'un and worth twenty dollars if she is worth a cent. Who'll make the first bid?" One loafer attempted to embrace the girl. She twisted out of his arms and ran to the street, followed by the man and her mother, who had been helped from the floor where she had fallen. She was now cursing wildly. A policeman took the pair into custody, the daughter to the Society and the mother to a police station.

This child was afterwards placed in a good home. Here everything was strange to her, but the good people who adopted her made all due allowance and with patience and love they trained her. To-day she is the greatest pride of her foster parents and her splendid young womanhood compels the admiration of all her associates. So much for what wholesome environment will do for the illegitimate daughter of a prostitute and beggar.

One of the most useful men I know to-day saw his father murder his mother in cold blood in

the tenement cellar where they lived. The father had come to this country as a fugitive after having feloniously assaulted a woman in his native land. After he had been here a year or two he sent for his wife and child, not because of any love for them but because he wanted their earnings. His wife failed to turn over enough money to satisfy him one day and he killed her. The child, being the sole witness, was detained by the authorities pending trial. The youngster attracted the attention of an official, who in the preparation of the murder case had occasion to question the boy. Through legal technicalities the father escaped with a conviction of murder in the second instead of the first degree and was sentenced to life imprisonment. The official who had been interested in the boy took him into his own home where he was treated as a son. The father had been in prison only a short time when in a fit of passion he killed a fellow convict. The boy's friend then legally adopted the lad and sent him through the public schools and to college. To-day this man is a great power for social good. The United States Government,

recognizing his ability, once sent him abroad on an important mission. On his return he received an offer of a place that would pay him three times the salary he was receiving for his social betterment work. "No," he replied, "I can do more good for the largest number where I am and the place where I can do the most good is the place for me." Had this man not been removed from his old surroundings and had he later wound up in state's prison or an almshouse some sociologist who hit upon his history would probably have pointed to it as another demonstration of that over-worked theory of heredity.

A noble woman who is the head of one of the best known private schools for young ladies in New York has at various times legally adopted little girls to the number of nine, all of whom were born in poverty. Most of them she has taken when they were still so young that they remembered little of their first homes. She has placed them in good surroundings and attended faithfully to their training and education. Under these good influences each of the nine girls

has developed into a useful member of society. Several of them now have fine homes of their own.

We often hear it said that it is difficult to do anything for delinquent girls. It was the writer's privilege recently to look in on a "reception" given by a club of half a hundred young women, each of whom at one time or another had been arraigned in the Children's Court. They had been there on all sorts of charges, from improper guardianship to burglary — at least some would have been charged with burglary had they been over the age of sixteen at the time of arrest. The fact, however, that they had been in the Children's Court or ever in serious trouble was unknown to most of those present; the girls themselves had evidently forgotten all about it. To look at that spotlessly gowned, radiant faced company that danced and laughed so happily was to find it difficult to believe. Big enough in heart and understanding to know that a girl no less than a boy, who had been worsted by bad environment was not a vicious creature to

be spurned and denied a further chance, the good woman who was responsible for this club had given the girls opportunities that each had used so well. Yes, as we shall see, the Big Sisters can do just as effective work as the Big Brothers.

But let us make a little pilgrimage if we are to observe some of the commonest conditions that cause not only juvenile but adult delinquency.

Leaving the great city's highway of commerce or its avenue of fashion we push east with the throng for a few blocks, then turn into one of those narrow, tenement-banked streets crowded with pushcarts and humanity, where between bawling hucksters, the shrill cries of children, the mixture of alien speech, we have come into a veritable bedlam. As we are jostled and crowded along we wonder how the children here ever get a chance to play. Just ahead of us, however, if our eyes be sharp, we may see a game in progress, not a wholesome one, but one that shows how some of the youngsters of this district, where humanity is packed in at the rate

of 1,600 to the acre, are finding an outlet for their energies. Two alert lads are pushing close to an Italian woman who carries a market basket on one arm and a handbag on the other. One has opened the clasp on the bag and is feeling about for the money, "sounding," these little thieves call it. Then comes a cry: "Here, Nell!" the warning from a third boy stationed somewhere in the crowd that the police are near, and instantly the other two dart off in different directions through the crowd and are gone. The child pickpocket, as we shall see later, is an almost hopeless problem. For him also the community that permits all this congestion and fails to provide the children of these districts with adequate play space is more or less responsible.

The life of the crowded streets with the thousands of things to attract his attention and sharpen his wits, the hard struggle that the tenement boy sees on every hand, often give the child of the crowded districts a surprising precocity. The example of his parents and their neighbors who must desperately struggle for

survival, mature his mind. Unfortunately for the child, the happenings from which he draws his premature philosophy of existence are not such as to tend to good moral development. A vast army of immigrants is herded into the already over congested tenement districts of New York City each year. The majority of aliens on arrival are robust, otherwise they would not pass the examination at Ellis Island. But after they have been crowded into the unsanitary tenements, deprived of light and air and forced to slave through all the waking hours for meagerest pittances, physical deterioration occurs quickly enough among many. How can we wonder at moral deterioration?

Let us walk a little farther along the streets and see for ourselves what it is to live in one of the tenements. Above us rattle the trains of the elevated road. We walk past a moving picture theater gay with crude presentments of what your ten cents will afford you within — on this side a stout lady simpers rosily on a green background and on the other a miraculous fire department, an elopement, battle, mur-

This is one of the many thousand "living" rooms in New York that have no direct light or ventilation

der and sudden death all in three pictures. When, we wonder, will the general public realize that the amusements offered to the children are of as much importance as any other form of education.

Then we turn into the street beyond. The doorway before which we stop is full of children trying to play upon the doorstep. The hall is very dark and ill-smelling; although we cannot see as we mount the creaking stairs, there is the evidence of other senses to tell us it is far from clean. As we go on there wells up to us that odor which is made up of many odors, which Galsworthy has called the smell of poverty itself, a part of the very life that is lived here. We knock at last at the top door in the rear; there is a pause, a shuffling step and it is opened by a woman. Life has laid so heavy a hand upon her that it counts for twice her years. The things she has endured have all left their mark — long hours and light pay, the ache in back and eyes that comes with monotonous and heavy toil; and fear, the endless fear for the rent and the dwindling coal in the box, the

lessening loaf in the cupboard, these have drawn heavy lines, have dulled her eyes and bent her shoulders. And in her one room in which she buys so high the dear privilege of life, in which she brings up and feeds her four small children, we see behind her a great pile of unfinished clothing. It is practically all of the furniture in the room as it is practically all of the family living. There are besides two rag covered mattresses on the floor and a little rusty stove. The chance to put food upon the stove, the right to lie down upon the pallets with a roof above their heads, these the family must win, stitch by stitch, from the great pile of clothing. It is the only resource which they have.

When she finds that we are neither inspectors nor Society officers the woman talks a little. She tells us that she and her family are working on piece work from the sweatshops and that between them they are able to make about eight dollars a week. The children are out of school a large part of the time — how can she help it? It is better for them to be out of school than to starve. And as she pulls them forward one

after the other, they do not look as if starvation was far away.

What is the use of inspectors, of talk of sanitation, education, health laws, in a room where living is reduced to terms like these — the terrible, great pile of ill paid work? Bad environment of course is not purely a matter of physical conditions nor is it confined to the tenements. It is present in luxury and waste and idle selfishness, as we know, as well as in poverty and overwork. The wonder is only that under the evil living conditions which society tolerates and practically forces on many of its members there are not more law breakers both young and old.

What is the use of inspectors, of talk of sanitarecent investigation showed that eleven hundred million dollars were spent in one year in penal institutions and as the result of crime, and this was five hundred millions more than were spent in schools, churches, hospitals, colleges and all forms of betterment, religious and educational work in the United States. Then we are to consider that seventy-one per cent. of the inmates

of penal institutions are under voting age. Is it not time that we were employing some of that eleven hundred million for prevention — in the improvement of conditions — rather than in punishment? Irrespective of moral economy it can require no argument to show how much more profitable it is to cultivate producers instead of parasites — the inmates of workhouses and jails.

Life is correspondence with environment and we propose to show further what bad environment is doing for our children and the community.

CHAPTER IV

THE STOLEN HERITAGE

IT is the sins of the city against the children that stand out most startlingly in the Children's Courts. The community robs the child in the congested districts of everything a growing human being needs for health of mind and body — and then it would punish him when his efforts to win these chances for himself bring him sharply against the law of a grown-up world. Were there anything like a rational distribution of population, were the dwellers in the tenements not deprived of light and space, were the tenement children not desperately put to it for anything like normal play, there would be a great falling off in the numbers that pass into the Children's Courts, the charitable, reformatory and the penal institutions. Until the millennium there will be some crime, but that fact does not excuse the

community from its responsibility for three-fourths of the present criminals.

It is in indulging the God-given play instinct under proper supervision that the child best develops his physical, mental and moral sides. When we force him to dodge about the garbage cans for his game of tag, push him into black, ill-smelling stairways for his hide-and-seek, how can the community complain when he does not develop into a good citizen?

Arraigned for the heinous crime of playing ball in the street, a half-clad lad was asked recently:

"What are the streets for?"

The culprit, whose head barely reached the bench, thought hard. He was white from starvation and fear.

"Automobiles, sir," he finally faltered. The Judge straightway sent him home.

In one of the crowded districts last summer I saw a little girl cry and flee in terror from a fluttering butterfly that by some strange chance had been blown across from the Jersey meadows. The only fields she had known were the cobbles

and asphalt, her only brooks were the gutter floods when the sweepers occasionally turned on the fire hydrant to flush the dirty pavements in her block.

In one group of thirty Children's Court boys, sent by the Big Brother Movement for a glimpse of nature into a camp maintained by Groton School in the New Hampshire hills recently, there were eight who had never been off Manhattan Island.

"Hey, what is dat?" demanded one youngster who was having his first glimpse of nature. He was pointing in wonder to an ordinary field daisy.

"Dat's a flower," weightily explained a companion who had been given two weeks in the country by a mission the previous summer. "An'," he added with evident pride in his wisdom, "it's got a name."

"Wat is it den, if you're so smart?" inquired the first boy skeptically.

"Well," replied the botanist, thinking hard, "dat's a cock-eyed Susie!" And "cock-eyed Susie" it remained during the rest of the camp.

It is little wonder that when some occasional charity takes a handful of children to the country for a week, children who have always lived in the city's din, there are those who cry: "It's so still it makes my ears hurt," and who beg to be taken home. But so-called charity barely touches the remotest edge of the problem. Real zeal for service, the sort that will set men to taking serious thought for their neighbors, that will give them decent housing, reasonable conditions, playgrounds, a chance in life, and not charity of the futile sort whose chief function seems to lie in paying salaries, that is what we need. How many respected citizens feel that they have accomplished the alpha and omega of all charitable requirements by periodically signing a subscription list and making out a check. The barrier between the people of the wretched homes and ourselves is not a vital difference; it is chiefly the product of selfishness.

Forced to spend much of their time in the surging, teeming streets, the children of the tenements are exposed to influences that do not make for good citizenship. One of the great

needs of the big cities is for more play space, as we have seen. And the cities are awakening to it; there are to-day about 300 municipalities of more than 5,000 population that are doing something toward providing supervised recreation for their coming citizens. But New York, which needs playgrounds most, is sadly behind. When the streets below Fourteenth Street were laid out, there was little thought that one day, on the site of the old Bowery Farm, the densest population in the civilized world would be massed. The real home, on whose doorstep the mother once sat in the early evening with watchful eye on her brood playing in the opposite lot, is now a wretched tenement, darkened by its towering new neighbors, cross-hatched with fire-escapes, upon each side. The common has gone, there is no longer even a back yard, but the children have increased till there are myriads of them — and where, in all this swarming world, is there a chance to play? The congestion that was once confined below Fourteenth Street has spread and spread until even above the Harlem

there are cañons of streets, packed with humanity, some of whose warrens offer less sunlight and air than did the habitations of the cave dwellers.

More than half of the children who come into the Children's Court of New York County, each year, are there through the thwarted desire for play. The street boy who breaks the law does not start as a bad boy. The street may be a great developer of self-reliance, initiative and courage. But too often there is no opportunity for the exercise of these very qualities except in criminal adventure. It is usually in the adventurous spirit that the boy consents to "lay kiggy for de cop," that is to serve as lookout for the policeman when his companions are prying open a window. It doesn't occur to him that he is doing wrong, his one thought has been adventure, play.

But the children of the streets must find vent for their energies in some direction and too often the only one left open to them is that which is criminal in the eyes of the law. It is little wonder that the pickpocket bosses, commonly,

called Fagins, have small trouble in getting recruits to their bands. The human creature is naturally gregarious, whether man, woman or child; he cannot be prevented from associating with his kind. If the man lives on Fifth Avenue his association may be called a club; if he lives in Minetta Lane it may be called a gang. It is merely a difference in pocketbook, education and surroundings. The underlying principle is the same.

The children of the streets, too, develop a wonderful philosophy, resourcefulness and readiness of speech. In one hot period there had seemed to be an unusually large number of juvenile offenders coming from one of the Hell's Kitchen precincts to the Children's Court. To learn something of the causes of this local outbreak of juvenile delinquency I arranged to meet a plain clothes man from Police Headquarters in front of the *Times* Building one midnight. I was to go with him on a tour of one of the precincts.

After our first greetings we noticed a bare-legged, grimy faced youngster in ragged jump-

ers on the busy corner with a great bundle of newspapers under his arm. The law says that no child under the age of fourteen years shall be permitted to sell newspapers without a badge from the Department of Education showing that he has completed a certain amount of schooling. In fact all children are prohibited from selling newspapers after ten o'clock at night. The officer was willing to overlook the hour, but demanded of the industrious newsy:

"Where's your badge?"

Quick as a flash the youngster, who was about as big as a peanut, looked up into the big officer's face and replied in the blandest manner:

"Say, Mister, I left me badge home on de piano."

Once I told this story before a number of "students of sociology." One turned to a companion and solemnly but audibly whispered: "Why, they don't have pianos in such homes, do they?" It was just such a class as this that would turn to Page 728 in the "Manual of Philanthropy" to discover how to distribute a hod of coal.

My plain clothes friend led the way over to Eleventh Avenue. The night was so hot that the people had been driven out from their ovens of rooms, and the roofs, the fire escapes, the pavements were littered with men, women and children. The officer pointed to a large company of boys on the opposite side of the street, who were still up and active. He drew me into a dark hallway with the remark:

"Boys are never quite natural when they know they are being watched." The same observation, I find, holds good about girls — yes, and men and women.

The youngsters made an attempt at a game of "cops and robbers," but it was too hot, too strenuous. They were standing idly by when their leader caught sight of one of those black, somber, dead horse wagons that go around on summer nights gathering up the carcasses of animals that have been stricken by the day's sun.

"Hats off!" commanded the leader, and he whipped off his cap and held it to his left breast. Without another word the crowd of youngsters

formed a platoon, doffed their caps and in perfect line swung up to the curb with military precision. There they stood with bared heads solemnly bowed, caps to their breasts, while the dead horse wagon rumbled slowly by.

It was another example of the quick-wittedness of the street boys and of their saving gift of humor. Some great criminologists have told us that no really hardened criminal has any sense of humor. It may not be true in every case, but this very appreciation of the ridiculous by our children of the streets, who are so accustomed to bumping against sharp corners, is one of the most hopeful signs.

But if these same boys had been helping one another over the fanlights of grocery stores, committing what would have been burglary for their elders, it could not have been wondered at. Forced to the streets on such a night, what was there for them to do? It was these very conditions — the lack of space to live and breathe and play — that were making such heavy police returns from the precinct at that time. Are the children who are forced to spend a large part

of their lives in the street with the crowding, the dirt, the noisy, sleepless nights of the quarter to be judged in the same way as those who have always had comfortable homes and the chance to lead normal, healthy lives? Notice their pitiful attempts to indulge the God-given instinct to play, the little girls sprawled flat on the pavements scratching marks with charred sticks in the criss-cross game, the boys trying to "skin the cat" on the basement rails, knocking a battered can with a crooked stick and (incidentally this is a violation of the law) playing craps or tormenting the push-cart peddlers. What a blessing is the grind-piano when it occasionally comes this way, what happiness it brings to the hearts, what activity to the feet of the half-clad troops of children as they prance back and forth over the uneven pavements in time to its crazy tunes!

But once in a while a boy with an ingenious mind finds a new method of diversion. For instance, there was "It's-A-Lemon," a substitute invented by his fellows for his real name, which was Isaac Lemon, or "Itzig" in the Jewish di-

minutive. The Lemon let himself down into an area-way one day and after lying comfortably in a corner wailed loudly and piteously:

"I'm dead, I'm kilt!" The crowd came quickly and naturally thought that the lad had fallen and fractured several bones. Soon an ambulance came clanging down the street. The Lemon was placed on a stretcher and tenderly lifted to the sidewalk. As he was borne swiftly away his cries ceased, the clatter of the gong was music in his ears, he was having his first ride in an automobile. Hurried to the emergency ward he was carefully examined. Nothing was broken, except the Third Commandment, and that by the surgeon when he found the boy as sound as a dollar. The Lemon was sent home in no very ceremonious fashion. But he had had a ride, a ride with histrionic accompaniments that made him a five-minute hero. The Lemon got such keen enjoyment out of this that he carried his operations into other districts with such persistency that the hospital authorities, who finally complained against him in the Children's Court, declared

that he had ridden in nearly every ambulance in the county.

Someone has said that about the only grassy place most of the children would ever reach was the burying ground. Even this is not altogether true, for one great burial place for children on the outskirts of New York, which I visited recently, was found to be absolutely barren of grass. The writer has often wondered why some of the old, unused burying grounds in the crowded sections of the town should not be opened up as play spaces for the children; for one live boy is worth a hundred dead men. When the community has been so strangely remiss in providing recreation spots it seems inconsistent that taxpayers should complain of heavy budgets for courts, reformatories, hospitals and institutions into which delinquents and dependents finally drift and where they have to be maintained at public expense. In the district below Fourteenth Street on Manhattan Island, into whose narrow area are crowded practically a million people, all the little make-believe parks put together aggregate

less than eighty acres. Here lives a population equal to that of Buffalo and Pittsburg combined, with only one-eighteenth the area and about one-twentieth the park space of those two cities. And many are not even pleasant open places of trees, grass and flowers; they are mere patches of asphalt and gravel from which the houses have grudgingly been pushed back a trifle. In all of New York City there are now about thirty playgrounds which are maintained by the Department of Parks throughout the year. The city, a few years ago, bought a number of lots in the crowded districts for park and playground purposes and stopped at that, although some of the land was paid for at the rate of more than $1,000,000 an acre. Official red tape and delay kept the space idle for years after its purchase, but much of it is now being developed. One day we shall recognize that playgrounds are quite as important as schools for our children. The supervising of the child's play, too, will be held to be of great importance, in the training not only of muscles but of character.

The pavement is the only sleeping place at night for many tenement dwellers driven from their warrens of rooms by the hot weather

A lad from Little Italy got over into Central Park one day on a tour of discovery. It was a sultry morning and as he neared one of the little lakes the lure of the water was too strong for him. He had been accustomed to jumping off the pier down in his neighborhood. He peeled off his jumpers and clad solely in nature's simple garb, dived in. All this was in full view of one of the busiest drives. It was not long before a crowd collected and a perspiring policeman came rushing to the scene. As the policeman neared the bank, Tony struck out for the middle, and to the delight of the crowd disported himself like a young porpoise. The policeman yelled, shook his fist at Tony, and ordered him to come out. Tony merely rolled over on his back, put his fingers to his nose, and wiggled them vigorously. The policeman ran around one edge of the lake and Tony circled to the other. Lap after lap the boy kept that fat policeman going until it seemed that he would drop of apoplexy, but in time Tony tired of his sport and condescended to paddle to shore. The policeman grabbed him by the ear and as he

hustled him over to the spot where Tony had dropped his jumpers, he said unkind things to him. Tony was taken directly to the Court. There was no need of his going to the Society for a bath — he had had that. With outraged feelings the policeman poured out his complaint to the Judge. His Honor finally turned to Tony and asked him how it all happened.

Puckers indicative of deep thought came to Tony's freckled forehead. Then his face brightened.

"You see it jest happen like dis. Me an' anuder feller was playin' on de edge o' de bank an' I tumbled into de water. Now, Judge, I got all wet an' I was afraid to go home like dat fer I was afraid me mudder would lick me. So —" the story halted just an instant while Tony stole a glance at his maternal parent who hovered portentously near —"So I t'inks, t'inks I, I'll take off me clothes an' lay 'em on de bank in de sun to dry. Now, Judge, I leaves it to you, I couldn't stand dere like dat, could I? I had to get into de water!" This last was delivered with an inflection of voice and sweep of hand in-

tended to clinch this appeal to judicial wisdom.

But the Court was not easily deceived. The Judge conferred with the mother, a large, capable, kindly-eyed woman from Sicily. Tony had not been in his home for two whole weeks. He had been on "de hook," as the mother declared.

"Tony, you didn't get that licking, did you?" inquired the Judge.

The culprit hung his head in silence.

"We now propose," continued the Court, "that you have an interview with your mother; you can step right upstairs with her and if she cannot conduct this interview without heat of temper there are other capable persons here who will be able to manage it. One of the officers of the Court will be present. When it is finished you can come back and we shall talk over the matter again."

Tony reappeared in the court room ten minutes later, tearful and penitent. He promised the Judge solemnly he would never tell a lie again, he would go to school every day when the term opened, his report card would show "Excellent" weekly in each column, in fact, he

would be a paragon of virtue. The boy was released on probation and we are glad to record that so far as was humanly possible he made good on every promise.

It is refreshing in this connection to note that there are sensible Judges in some of our Children's Courts who, in exceptional cases, believe in the efficacy of a good old-fashioned spanking. While the law does not usually give them power to order this treatment they can sometimes bring the parent by a few wise hints to volunteer his services, and the rite is performed under the watchful eye of someone connected with the Court. It is an interesting fact, too, that of the boys thus treated rarely if ever does one get back for a subsequent offense. While corporal punishment is by no means to be recommended generally, there are occasional cases when it is the best, if not the only way, to work a cure.

There are many vacant lots in the cities whose owners would gladly turn them over to the public as playgrounds, free of rent, if the city would pay the trifling cost of supervision. Park and playground associations have provided private

funds for a little of the work. But these organizations are merely paving the way, it is too big a proposition for them to manage alone. Under present laws, some cities cannot pay an employé for work on private grounds. A simple way to overcome this difficulty would be to lease the ground from its owners at a nominal rent of a dollar a year. There might then be money for supervision and the children could have their play.

There should not be a schoolhouse in a large city that does not have a playground or a play roof. One well-known physician, an expert in hygiene who has carefully studied the situation, has declared: "Better a playground without a schoolhouse than a schoolhouse without a playground." This expert knows that aside from having a weak physique the play-starved child lacks spirit and a sense of fairness. He is a warped little creature, learning with difficulty perhaps, by rote, but unfit to go out into the world and make a living for himself. Aside from the physical advantages of games, the child on supervised recreation grounds gains,

best of all, the spirit of fair play. There is no place where the idea of honor is better taught. Here the boy learns the folly of cheating and the wisdom of square dealing.

Those who oppose appropriations for play spaces have yet to learn that the most economic scheme for the handling of poverty is that which prevents it. The child stunted in mind and body is likely to become a permanent charge on the community. It is he who keeps the policemen, the courts, the charity departments busy and fills the State's institutions. By giving the future citizen something like a fair start, a chance to develop his capacities, we are insuring ourselves against his crime and dependency. He is not only thus prevented from becoming a public charge but he develops into a contributor to the public good.

The results in future citizenship will pay the community a hundredfold for every dollar expended toward giving the children of the pent-in districts proper exercise for their bodies and their imaginations.

CHAPTER V

THE MILLS OF GREED

There are thousands hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.— *Henry Thoreau.*

THE mills of greed grind fast in the packed districts of the great cities. The greater the herding, the harder they grind. The immigrants form most of the grist, the steamship lines are the hoppers and the tenement and sweatshop owners the main wheels. The result of the relentless grinding is a devitalized product, difficult for the city to assimilate and affecting its moral and physical health. That much of this product finds its way into charity departments, courts, public institutions and into premature and pauper graves is not the fault of the struggling men and women of tenements, but is due to the community's self-indulgent apathy. To too many citizens no method of making money is wrong unless it has violated a section

in the penal laws and they are caught. The community's chief weakness lies in its large number of members who do not care particularly what happens as long as nothing uncomfortable happens to them.

There are brutal truths regarding living conditions in our great cities to which it were criminal to continue longer to close our eyes. They cry for immediate attention and must receive it, even though we have never before entered earnestly and sympathetically into the life of the community. The effects of inhuman congestion and the greed that preys on it are perhaps more immediately apparent in New York than elsewhere. There is no intention here, however, to picture that metropolis as vicious above all other cities. We speak of New York here merely as an illustration. While each city has its own problems many of these problems are due to congestion. There is always to be considered in connection with New York the peculiar shape and position of its land, its size and its heterogeneous population. Providence has indeed been good to it in the matter of nat-

ural advantages, water on every side and the fresh winds that blow in from the sea, otherwise its death rate which is now about three points higher than that of London would be much greater still. Nowhere, however, is there such herding of human beings into dark, disease-breeding tenements, and nowhere such opportunity to cure the evils of congestion and housing would men but take hold.

Does it mean anything to you that in the Metropolis an army of about one-half million men, women and children, has been packed each night into 200,000 living rooms having no windows, no direct light or ventilation, or not legally lighted? Of this number 50,000 rooms are totally dark. The Tenement Department has recently been busy chopping holes into some of the dark cells of brick at the rate of 4,000 a month but it will never master the situation until the community has roused itself. The present Commissioner, too, has with commendable activity been ripping school sinks out of the malodorous courts, and he now declares there is not a school sink on occupied premises on

Manhattan Island. There are 10,000 deaths a year in New York City from tuberculosis alone and 28,000 new cases of the "white plague" develop every twelve months. Tuberculosis, too, is a preventable disease. Two-thirds of our consumption is bred in the tenements, much of it in those same black rooms.

If, year after year, in one little district 10,000 men were killed in battle and 28,000 more were cruelly wounded, the world would arise and stop it. But because these 10,000 men, women and children, go out quietly in their little black holes and there are no dramatic features, the community sits supinely by. Of all the child cripples in New York more than ninety per cent. owe their affliction to bone tuberculosis. It is nobody's business, at least it is not sufficiently the community's business, to insist on living conditions that would put an end to the white death.

Oh, yes, there are sanitaria, church roof camps, free dispensaries, but all these begin at the wrong end of the problem — they are puny palliatives and barely touch the edges — they

usually begin after the damage is done. Such futile methods will never reach the real cause. There are other ailments, physical and moral, which sap the city's vitality and which in the aggregate are much more deadly than tuberculosis. The startling thing is, it is not illegal to have conditions which produce them. These diseases, physical and moral, could be effectively prevented if the community would but insist on it.

The crowding of Manhattan Island is two-thirds greater than that in any European city and this condition is rapidly being carried into the Bronx. The real estate speculators are quietly, but effectively, forcing their legal right to kill off men, women and children in the outlying districts in the same way that they have in Manhattan. They quite naturally point out that for speculative purposes this sort of murder has been legalized below the Bronx and ask why that right should not be extended. There are areas on Manhattan Island where human beings are massed in at the rate of 1,400 to the acre. In the lower part of the Bronx there is an area

which has a population of more than 1,000 to the acre. One new house there, according to a statement of the Tenement House Commissioner, has seventeen families on a floor.

Private interests are fast spreading this rate of congestion, for the greater the crowd the higher the rents. That is the reason a block of tenement property in the congested districts of Manhattan Island is worth a million and a half of dollars. One day we shall cease to put these things — murder, starvation, and disease — in terms of dollars and cents, and we shall translate them into terms of men, women and children. But perhaps these statements, even though they deal with life and death, do not appeal as would a concrete instance.

A hollow-eyed mother on whom is the pallor of the white death steps weakly to the little platform in front of the Judge's bench in the Children's Court. She leads the father, who is nearly blind from tuberculosis. The five children of the pair — there is no race suicide in this class — are already standing within the rail. As they see the mother they set up a joyous clamor

and one little girl proudly extends a foot to show a new pair of shoes with which her bare feet were shod at the Society's rooms. All there had been between this four-year-old and absolute nakedness, when the officer visited the hole in Mulberry Street in which they lived, was a pair of torn gingham jumpers. The clothing of the four boys, who range in age from three to eleven, had been quite as scant.

The mother grasps the little girl and Guiseppe, the culprit, in a single embrace. She grows suddenly faint, the effort is too much. It was Guiseppe's theft of copper wire that brought the plight of this family to official attention. It is the kindest thing that happens to some children to get arrested. A clerk in the offices on the top floor of Police Headquarters had seen the boy on an adjoining roof cutting telephone lines. Within a few minutes detectives pounced down on him and he was on his way to the Society.

The officer who went to Mulberry Street to notify the parents, found the family of seven starving in two black, foul rooms — but not too

black nor too foul to prevent the landlord from extracting eleven dollars a month for rent as long as the mother could keep her frail fingers going at sweatshop sewing. But finally her fingers failed her. The father's affliction, due to the tenement, had long kept him from work. He had come here a strong, sturdy, farm laborer from a vine-clad cottage in Sicily. Guiseppe was the only child whose help counted for much. He sold newspapers and sewed on buttons far into the night. It is true that the seven- and five-year-old boys had helped with the bastings of the piece work often until they were no longer able to hold up their heavy heads. Yes, even children of three are often forced into this slavery. The blood rents, the wage pittances, force parents thus to use their children.

The sweatshop owners taking advantage of the over-supply of labor, of the poverty, the sharp need of the people in the crowded districts, are absolute dictators as to wages. Sometimes they pay twelve cents a pair for finishing men's pants, sometimes they pay four cents a dozen pairs for finishing boys' pants.

There is no wage too low for them to offer and usually no wage too low to be accepted. That the sweatshop goods often go germ-laden out of these homes to the public does not concern the sweatshop owner. He gets the work cheap.

When the janitor's call for the rent was but ten days off Guiseppe was sent first to pawn his mother's shawl, then the two-year-old's dress. The quilts and blankets went last, for in the absence of other clothing and fire, the month being March, the children could be kept in bed. On his last trip to the pawnshop Guiseppe thought of the copper wire and determined to save the family. It is easy to moralize about the thief, but what about ourselves had we been in Guiseppe's place?

Instead of charging Guiseppe with theft a complaint of improper guardianship was drawn in which all the children were included. It was an improper guardianship that the parents could not help, it was the community's improper guardianship. For the State is the ultimate parent of the child.

The Court explained in as kindly a way as

possible that it was not because Guiseppe had stolen the wire that the children were to be sent to an institution in the country, but because the parents, with their afflictions, were not able to care for them. As the Court's order was interpreted and bore in on the pair, the mother arose, flung out her arms and with a scream sank back fainting into her chair. The blind father gropingly tried to help her.

That scream is heard often in the Children's Courts. It is a pity that it cannot also be heard in the legislative halls, or that it does not echo in the uptown drawing-rooms of some of the tenement owners.

There is nothing cheap in many of the tenements except human life. Light, air, water, heat, the elemental things cost blood money. Their inhabitants are forced to pay far more proportionately than the middle class or those who live in luxurious homes. The average rent in the congested districts is five dollars a month for a room in these over-packed barracks. For the thousands that fall into the clutches of the sweatshop owner this rental means

not only the crowding in of the family, the taking of lodgers to the peril of the children, but also midnight labor, pain, suffering, and perhaps death. Counted by the cost at which they are won, the dollars of the poor are priceless. In return what do they and their children get?

A family whose scant belongings a city marshal has dumped into the street for nonpayment of rent is brought to the Children's Court. The father, mother and three younger children had been found seated on the rickety furniture in the rain. They were afraid to leave it lest it be stolen. An older boy and girl had gone into another block to beg and there were arrested. This family has been forced to pay $13.50 a month for two rooms in an "improved apartment." The rent has been increased five dollars a month in two years, the last increase having been made when the flats were "improved." Work in the sweatshops had grown slack, the tailor's scanty wages had stopped and the wife had been ill. In company with an officer I went down into Forsyth Street to see

what manner of improvements these were. The "To-Let" sign outside advertised: "Handsomely Decorated, Toilet and Bath in Each Apartment." A smear of gaudy paint over years' accumulation of dirt in the narrow entrance constituted the handsome decorations. The hall was so black that before we reached the stairs the beauties of the vivid decorations were lost. We groped for the rickety banister in the Stygian darkness. The grinding of dirt under our feet told of the conditions of the steps. The law says that light must burn in these hallways but gas costs money and the tenement landlord believed in economy. That we might see one of these "improved apartments" inhabited we knocked at a door.

A ragged little girl with bare feet and tousled red hair opened the door, peered out into the darkness and called shrilly:

"What yer want?"

We could see her plainly enough, for at the back of the room which served the double duty of sleeping place and kitchen there was a window which actually let in daylight. At once it

was apparent where a part of that $13.50 went — this flat was exactly like the one from which the unfortunate family had been evicted. There were two shake-downs on the floor. An overpowering steamy odor of cabbage came from a pot on the stove.

The officer explained that we wanted to see the apartment. The little girl was glad of the opportunity to show all of the "improvements." Evidently they had lived in a much worse place before.

"It's a grand house we live in now," she said proudly. We asked to see the bathroom.

"There ain't no bathroom, but there's the bath," and she pointed at the kitchen tub.

"But that's a wash tub," we replied.

"Yes, and it's a bath tub too," she answered, plainly showing her injured feelings. She mounted a chair and pulled out a wooden partition that divided the tub. A lot of dirty clothes were in soak.

"Ye see, when yer wants to take a bath ye pulls de board out and den ye steps inter de tub just likes dis," and she nimbly climbed in

and pranced about on the wet clothes. "Ye gets lots of room dis way. Gee, I takes a bath pretty near every month now." Remember, this was an "improved" apartment.

The toilet was found to be a cubby-hole between the kitchen, which was really the light room, and the "parlor" which had no light save that which came from a little porthole that opened on a narrow court. The toilet was out of order and the officer told me that the landlord of this house, who owned considerable other tenement property, had been arrested recently when it was found that the ventilating pipes of the toilets in his buildings, instead of leading to the roofs and the open air, had in each closet simply been carried to the dead wall. It is a common thing for such "improvements" to be made in tenement property and this always brings an increase in rent. There are only 250 inspectors in the Tenement House Department of New York City with 103,000 tenements to be inspected. So the number of blind ventilating pipes and fake improvements that may go undiscovered is great.

The red-headed little girl in answer to a question as to how many lodgers there were suddenly grew cautious.

"Ye ain't inspectors, are ye?"

Reassured on that point she told us that besides her father, mother and three children three men slept in the two rooms at night, that is, four persons in a room. That is not nearly so bad as the situation in many homes. The law as it stands to-day allows three persons to live in one room.

There came to mind the case of a little girl not much larger than our hostess of that day, who was brought into Court after she had strangled her newly born baby of which one of the lodgers had been the father. Yes, and the case of another child who had contracted an incurable disease from one of the lodgers that her family had been forced to harbor to help in meeting the monthly rent. Cases growing out of the defilement of innocent children by lodgers are common in the Children's Courts and these form another fearful count against the community which permits the inhuman herding in the tenements. It was with such thoughts that we descended the black stairs

and left the "improved apartments" of the Forsyth Street house.

So often visitors at the Children's Courts, looking over the dirty, dull, hopeless, careworn parents, who flock there each day because their children have been arrested, observe: "There's no excuse for their being dirty; soap and water are cheap." In answer to this the visitors have been asked: "Do you know the real tenements?" The reply as a rule is to the effect that they have read about them, or once visited a Bowery mission or have ridden through Chinatown on top of a sight-seeing bus. It may be that one of the visitors has had a friend, a settlement worker, who lived in a "model tenement." It is always a source of wonder to the writer why so few "model tenements" house the people for whose benefit they are supposed to have been built. The tenants, for the most part, are would-be Bohemians or settlement workers who are faddists and who love to write home to the folks in Illinois and tell them that in their heroic efforts for human uplift they have gone to live "right in the slums." Some of their "slum" flats, how-

ever, possess an atmosphere that would hardly encourage the free visiting of real tenement neighbors.

As to cleanliness in the tenements, how many of us would long be particular about the appearance of our linen if we had to sleep in our clothing night after night? Would we regularly scour our faces and scrub our teeth if, to get a drop of water, we had to wait long in a bucket-bearing brigade at a common sink in a public hall, each morning, when every second counted on the sweatshop piece work and a minute lost might mean eviction or starvation for our children? No, in such a grind there is little chance for cleanliness and there is ever an enforced disregard of self-respect.

A little colored boy, as black as African night, stood in the hallway of the Children's Court one day waiting for his case to be called. He had an expansive smile and his white teeth attracted my attention. I stopped and asked his name.

"Walter Scott," he replied, with pride.

"What are you laughing about?" I asked.

It was then discovered that he stuttered.

"De fun-fun-fun-funniest thing hap-hap-happened to me, Mist-Mist-Mister," he managed to say, his bright smile never failing. "Dey took me up to de Ger-Ger-Gerries (a name that many children have for the Society) and dey give me a ba-ba-ba-bath. An' I blush-blush blush-blushed, all over ma face."

And I verily believe that the little colored boy did blanch, if not blush, at this, his first bath, as he confessed to me it was. It should be said here, however, that the tenements occupied by the colored people are usually much better kept than those of the alien whites.

The question is frequently asked, by people who do not know the real conditions, why the foreigners do not move on to the open places and avoid the congestion and the extortionate rents. They would had they the means. The trouble is that thousands, yes, and hundreds of thousands, do not bring enough money to carry them beyond New York. No immigrant is allowed to remain in a Canadian city unless he can show the immigrant inspectors of that Dominion at least fifty dollars. It would be wise were

For a few cents a day entire families, including babies, often labor far into the night on piece work in the "licensed" tenements

such a law enacted here. And yet, what a clamor of protest arose against the Commissioner at Ellis Island because he arbitrarily set twenty-five dollars as the amount which each newly arrived alien must bring with him.

Often their own countrymen prey on the helpless immigrants and are the hardest landlords and employers. As illustrating this, the very day these lines were written a woman came into Court to complain that she was no longer able to care for her children because her husband's employer, who came from their same province in Italy, would not pay him more than $5.50 a week for twelve hours' work each day. Her husband was an able-bodied man, but because of the over-supply of labor was unable to get work elsewhere.

That the community has denied the right of the people in the congested districts to have children is apparent from the brutal but frank statement which appears in a recent annual report of the Association For Improving The Condition Of The Poor.

"The birth of a child," it is stated, "is a

serious menace to the prosperity of the ordinary laborer's family, and in the case of the unskilled poor in our great cities the birth of a second or third child, even in prosperous times, usually brings disaster to the home."

This is a fact that is not yet comprehended by the great mass of immigrants. They still believe that children are blessings and in this are more human than some of their richer neighbors. Our citizens of to-morrow being for the most part reenforced from this poor class, the State as the ultimate parent owes them a chance for work and a decent dwelling place.

Less than 200,000 persons own all the real estate of New York City. There are eight owners alone whose holdings aggregate in value about $150,000,000, the total area of these holdings being 264.8 acres. The mortality and crime rates in any district vary directly with the density of the population just as it has been proved that the size and weight of children at a given age are in direct relation to the number living in a room. The fewer in a room the taller and healthier they are.

It is axiomatic that dark rooms are never kept clean and there can be no wonder that they breed disease and crime. One expert who was before the recent Congestion Commission has declared that not even in St. Petersburg, in heathen Canton, or Bombay, was there such great congestion, nor did the poor suffer so much from excessive rents as in our metropolis.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOPPERS

ABOUT one million human beings are shuttled into the country each year by the steamships. Thousands of them congest in the nation's gateway. By the gateway New York is meant, for, unfortunately, most immigrants are led to believe this the only entrance to the country. It is easiest for the transatlantic companies to unload the human freight in this port. It is a stimulated, artificial immigration that is over-crowding the great cities, particularly New York and its municipal near neighbors. This congestion is greatly responsible for the poverty, crime, wretchedness and needless mortality in these communities.

The new arrivals come here expecting to find an asylum from race and religious persecution, a refuge from poverty and famine, or a chance to better their condition. Notaries, postmasters,

school mistresses, any who have persuasive power and some following, act as agents to sell steamship tickets — for they get a commission. They often induce the families to mortgage their little possessions and to start for this country with funds insufficient to carry them beyond Ellis Island. More than half a million immigrants brought with them, in the year which ended June 30th, 1909, less than twenty-five dollars a head. The Commissioner at Ellis Island has since laid down the wise rule that each arriving immigrant must show not less than twenty-five dollars. A great cry has gone up over this requirement and yet it is not enough; for those who expect to remain in the cities the amount should be doubled.

Having no means to reach the open places where they are really needed, many thousands of the incoming horde are stranded in the gateway each year, and are forced into a bitter slavery. The immigrant has been exploited from the moment he first began to deal with the agent on the other side, and here, unable to get beyond the metropolis, he is crushed between the wheels,

on the one hand the extortionate landlord, on the other the greed of the sweatshop manager or the padrone. The result is the heaping up of a devitalized product that is unwholesome for municipality or nation.

But, someone will say, many immigrants do make money, they do better themselves. Yes, otherwise three hundred million dollars of our country's money would not be sent back to Europe each year. But even though the dollar blinds our eyes, that is no excuse for indifference to the cruelty that meets the weaker ones of the insweeping flood. How hypocritical the magnanimity of our much vaunted open door when we sit quietly by while the robbing of these victims, helplessly stalled in our gateway, goes relentlessly on.

What right have we to complain that so much of our country's money, a large part of it earned by blood sweat, is sent back to Europe each year and that so many of the successful immigrants refuse to become American citizens? America has always boasted herself as a refuge for the oppressed. But as we have grown, our increased

responsibilities to the new arrivals have been wholly disregarded.

There is no argument here against the open door; but instead of just one door many should be used and the immigrants, instead of being allowed to congest in the big cities, should be moved on to the open country that really needs them and where they would have a fairer chance.

The call of the West: "Homes for the homeless; food for the hungry; work for the unemployed; land for the landless; gold for the penniless; freedom for the enslaved and room for all," may tingle the blood; but when the immigrants find themselves huddled into an East Side cellar or into the back room of a rear tenement, already crowded, their dreams turn to a despair that is not productive of good citizenship. They may have to live for weeks on the charity of relations and friends before any work is found. Then there are no wages too low for them to grasp. In the fierce struggle for existence both father and mother must fight in the bread-winning. Tired eyes, empty stomachs and harassed souls do not usually go with the best parental care. Too

often the children are forced to drudgery or else run wild in the streets.

There is no place where the effects of all this are more apparent than in the Children's Courts and the Charities Departments. The crushing conditions of the new environment have in thousands of cases rendered the parents helpless in the upbringing of their children. To the struggle for existence, relentless everywhere, are added the difficulties of new laws, new customs and a strange language, great handicaps in themselves.

A common tongue is the strongest bond of the alien colonies. The parents have reached a mental stage where it is difficult to learn a new language. It frequently happens that parents come into court who have lived here fifteen or twenty years and who yet will not trust themselves to speak a word of their adopted country's language. Children, on the other hand, quickly take up the new tongue and adapt themselves to new conditions. They are the interpreters and too often the dictators in their families and come to feel a superiority to the bewildered parents.

The boy finds he can impose on his father who perhaps was a czar in his own household back in Russia, the girl sees that she can readily deceive her mother who was so watchful of her morals in the old home. Their elders' strict notions of filial respect, of correct conduct, from which the children would not have dared depart in their native country, are flouted. The boy's new companions of the dark stairways, malodorous courts and teeming streets too often teach him to evade the truant officer. They also bring him to believe that the "cop" is his worst enemy. The girls are constantly exposed through contact with the men lodgers whom the family is forced for the rent's sake to huddle into their narrow rooms at night. The inexorable struggle for bread has so filled every working moment of the parents that they, perhaps, have not seen the danger until it was too late.

Again, the hard usage to which they have been subjected sometimes blunts the moral sensibilities of the parent. The struggle for bread has been so fierce that they often value their .offspring solely for the child's money making ability. If

the State insists on making Guiseppi go to school and will not allow him to work until he is fourteen, then they argue that the State should take care of him until that time. Until recently, it has been a common practice for such parents to try to rid themselves of their children by sending them to the "weissenhaus" or the "college." Any institution, charitable or reformatory, was known to a certain class as a "college." When, on trumped up cases against their own offspring, they had succeeded in having them sent to a reformatory, they were as proud as more fortunate parents would have been in having placed a son at Harvard or Yale. The children were fed and clothed in the public institutions and when they came out had some knowledge of a trade.

Laws have been passed in some States which give the Justices in the Children's Courts the right to place, at discretion, the father of any child committed under an order to pay to the State what the child's maintenance costs in the institution. This has put a check on the trumped-up stories.

Let it be said here in justice to the immigrants

that the majority of parents in the alien colonies are anxious to do the best they can for their children. Considering the living conditions into which they are forced the great wonder is that they do so well. In these dense colonies, where a common foreign tongue is spoken, barriers are built about the people that are not easily penetrated by our ideas of well-being and good citizenship.

A swarthy Sicilian applied at the Children's Court recently for "a ticket."

"What sort of a ticket?" demanded a clerk.

"Me want to killa man," was his bland reply.

To fathom the mental operation prompting this request required an interpreter. A neighbor and fellow countryman, it seemed, had taunted him to a point of frenzy. He had determined on blood vengeance. But he wanted to proceed strictly in accordance with his notion of American law. Somewhere he had heard that judges could issue revolver permits. If official permission to carry a pistol was to be obtained, he reasoned, certainly there went with it the legal right to use the weapon. This prospective citizen, on

legal murder bent, had been in the country three years, all of which had been spent in Little Italy. It took a lot of persuasion to convince him that under the circumstances no judge would be inclined to grant him permission to carry a weapon and even were that permission given no right could go with it to shoot down one of his fellows.

But far more serious than the distorted notions which these crowded people of the alien colonies get as to American citizenship, is the fearful slavery into which hordes of them are forced. The landlord and sweatshop owner each knows that the greater the crowd the higher will be the rents and the lower the wages — each in his own way reaps profit. The owner of the chattel slave was looking only to his own interest when he saw that his black property had a comfortable bed in which to sleep at night, a weather-proof roof over his head and wholesome, sustaining food. The men who drive the immigrant slave do not worry about these things; they know that for every man, woman or child that drops out through starvation or exhaustion there are thousands to step into the place.

On the side of dollars and cents, it is estimated that although $800 is the minimum amount upon which a man can support himself, a wife and three children under working age in Manhattan and the Bronx, a recent investigation has shown that the average wage of 339,221 workers in these two boroughs is only $543. The average wages of 101,995 heads of families in Brooklyn was $519. The economic loss from 1905 to 1908 through deaths from preventable disease in New York City alone was $160,000,000. With the continuance of the immigration flood and the further crowding in of thousands of newly arrived aliens in New York the wages will fall lower and lower, while the economic loss to the community will go mounting up.

There is no scruple in the methods of agents who sell tickets in driving a contract for passage. The writer has seen copies of mortgages given on the other side that would tie up the prospective immigrant's wages for years and bind him to a lifelong slavery here. The Commissioner General of Immigration protests vigorously in his annual reports against the flagrant

stimulation of immigration for profit. He says, for instance:

> The truth of the matter is that the peasants have for a number of years supplied a rich harvest to the promoters of immigration. The promoter is usually a steamship ticket agent employed on a commission basis, or a professional money lender or a combination of the two. . . . The more aliens they bring over the more there are to be carried back if failure meets the tentative immigrant and the more likely to follow later if success is his lot. Whatever the outcome it is a good commercial proposition for the steamship line.

It is only in the years of slumps in third-class passenger traffic that the big lines pass dividends. One of the largest English companies which did not pay a dividend in April, 1909, explained in its report: "The number of third-class passengers landed in the United States in 1908 was much smaller than in 1907." The directors of one of the biggest German companies explained, in that same year, that the great drop in profits shown by the annual balance sheet was due to "the unparalleled reduction in the number of steerage passengers carried" which was about 185,000

A few of the million immigrants who arrive here each year, sturdy men and women who should go to the farms, but who congest in the cities

less than in the previous year. But in normal times, in which there are brought to us about 1,000,000 immigrants annually, the transatlantic lines make big profits from the steerage.

With the Commissioner General of Immigration protesting year after year, why are not some of these evils remedied? The answer is simple—his protests are not allowed to go far. In a recent report he said:

> Money lenders and other sharks have joined hands for the purpose of exploiting prospective passengers, providing them with passage money under a credit system which amounted almost to robbery; and insuring themselves against loss by taking mortgages and joint notes.
>
> They have issued circulars and advertisements and made use of extensive correspondence through their own agents in this country and in Europe, some of it spurious in character, to impress the peasants with the belief that employment could be secured on landing in the United States.

How many of these reports reached the public? In answer to a letter addressed to the Commissioner General the reply has been that just 5,000 reports are annually printed and distributed. And yet at the last presi-

dential election there were about 15,000,000 voters who were supposed to have exercised their franchise with intelligence. Why is it that more of them were not made familiar with the facts?

That New York is really no longer able to cope with the flood is evidenced when such men as Jacob H. Schiff, who perhaps has done more to help the oppressed in the land of his fathers than any one American, said recently to a gathering of newly arrived immigrants:

> We feel that we have already reached the limit of absorption. We must set you recent immigrants to thinking and you must advise your friends at home. You must do this for your own good, for your health and prosperity and for the future of your children. Help us to solve the problem of distribution. The problem of immigration to-day is not what it was thirty years ago. Experience has taught us that there is a limit to this city's absorbing capacity. We must continue to take in the immigrant, but we must make him go to some other part of the United States.

CHAPTER VII

THE STRANDED HOST

THERE are powerful influences operating against the Americanization of our immigrants. The ticket agents and the foreign banking concerns which have branches here as well as the private "bankers" usually encourage the retention of citizenship in the fatherland. They know that as long as the immigrant does not become an American citizen he will send his savings back to his native country, or if he is unable to save he will return home and that means the sale of another passage. The American branches of the foreign banks often advertise extensively that they are authorized by the home Governments to take care of the savings of their countrymen here and transport them back to Europe. The ignorant depositors, knowing nothing of our State and national banks, are

easily persuaded that their own banks are the safest. Newspapers teaching old country doctrines and influencing the aliens to retain their native citizenship are printed by these foreign and private banks and the ticket agencies. The slower depositors are in becoming American citizens the longer the private banks will handle their money. The fact that 518,215 aliens returned home in the year that ended June 30, 1911, was largely due to these influences. Of that number 295,666 were emigrant aliens, that is departing aliens whose residence had been in the United States but who intended to live permanently abroad. There were also 222,549 non-emigrant aliens, that is aliens who resided abroad and who returned to their homes after a temporary trip to the United States. The net gain in population by immigration in that one year then was 512,085, as compared with 817,619 for the fiscal year 1910. The vast majority of those returning, unfortunately, were not from the congested districts of New York.

Of the coalition of immigrant bankers and

other "interests" one Congressional Commission has said:

> By constant appeal to the prejudice and patriotism of the immigrant his Americanization is not only retarded but deliberately combated in order that he may be held as a source of income to those whom he trusts.

An investigation in 1907 showed there were 2,625 concerns in the United States doing an immigrant banking business. They had not then spread west of the Mississippi river. The number has greatly increased since. A government report at that time described these banks as "entirely irresponsible." It has been estimated that more than 100,000 persons are now engaged in the immigrant banking, ticket agency and padrone business.

The disasters to their helpless clients through the stealings and failures of so-called private bankers are frequent and leave a long trail of wretchedness and poverty. Many cases come to light in the Children's Courts and in the Charities Departments where the families' misfortunes have been caused by the dishonest collapse of

these institutions. Perhaps after years of hardest toil it has been possible to put aside a few dollars with the "banker." He has always been trusted, too, to transmit money to Europe to pay off the obligations there. Then the banker has disappeared over-night and his doors have closed. He has appropriated the money and there is no redress. In one year, the amount stolen from alien depositors in New York alone by such bogus institutions was a million and a half. One banker, bonded for $15,000, failed with obligations outstanding for $600,000.

An investigation showed that eighty per cent. of these banks easily violated a ridiculous law that, regardless of the amount of deposits, they should be bonded for $15,000. Other States have laws quite as lax. One banker who had branches in Pittsburg and Connellsville as well as New York, went into the hands of a receiver lately with liabilities of nearly $1,000,000. A Congressional Commission was appointed to investigate, but most commissions bring little action. This particular Commission, however, reported regarding this case:

This banker is a national and religious leader among his people having organized and headed a national Slovak society in this country. He issues a daily, a weekly, a humorous monthly, a yearly almanac, and from time to time other publications. Although he has renounced allegiance to Hungary, severed all political ties with that country and has become an American citizen, he does not advise the Slovak countrymen to do the same, but, instead, preaches in all his publications a militant and enthusiastic Pan-Slovakism. So long as the Slovaks remain Slovaks and can be filled with Slovak patriotism and enthusiasm by such agitation, just so long will they remain a source of profit to the banker.

"Prior to the recent industrial depression this man was accustomed to transmit abroad on behalf of his patrons, from $2,000,000 to $2,500,000 annually and to sell 6,000 steamship tickets per year.

A recent statute enacted in New York requiring of each private banker a deposit in cash of $10,000 and a bond of from $10,000 to $100,000 — to be fixed in proportion to the amount of business done — may possibly be of some help in this State. There are of course reliable private bankers, and they have been urging that it would be much safer to compel these concerns to invest only in first-class mortgages at no more than sixty per cent. valuation, making it a crime to invest otherwise. They say the new

law subjects them to the exactions of surety companies that "tie them hand and foot." If private banks are permitted to handle immigrant money at all they should be subjected to just as strict supervisions as our native banking institutions.

Many of the bankers and ticket agents are padrones, placing aliens at work where and under what conditions they choose. Immigrants who finally get beyond New York, are often first herded into boarding houses, whose keepers are the steamship agents or padrones themselves or who work hand in hand with them. One private banker, whose operations recently received official attention, had handled immigrants by the hundred. Taking advantage of their ignorance he agreed to pay his countrymen seventy-five cents a day for their labor. He housed them, pending the placing of them with big contractors, charged his own prices for food and lodging and when the new arrivals finally went to work there were substantial bills hanging over them. He hired the men out at $1.50 a day, and at times in hundred-men lots. He not only made one hun-

dred per cent. on their wages, but profited fifty per cent. on what he forced from them for food and lodging.

Between 150,000 and 200,000 farm laborers and farmers are admitted to the United States each year, men whose help is badly needed for our rapidly deteriorating agriculture. They were anxious to go to the land, to do a man's work, for certainly the tillage of the soil is one of man's most desirable occupations. A vast number of them get no nearer to a farm than a pushcart or a sweatshop on the East Side. Others are shuttled into the mines or on contract labor jobs to slave for the padrones.

When the immigrant has enough money to get past New York, he is often forced to pay about as much for his transportation as if he were buying a first-class ticket. The General Passenger Traffic Manager of one of the biggest roads in the country admitted recently, at a hearing before a special examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission, that the immigrants on some lines were forced to pay practically as much for their transportation as if accommodations and privi-

leges offered had been first-class. The first-class ticket was unlimited, the immigrant's ticket was limited to two days. The immigrant could ride only in a smoking car or on an immigrant train, the cars of which in many instances did not have washstands. There were no porters or brakemen to assist the women or children.

It also went on record at this hearing that the immigrants who paid full passenger rates were often kept huddled together for hours at various terminals. Our prospective citizens did not expect plush cushions or leather couches, nor had they been led to believe when they left their homes on the other side that they would be forced to pay for first-class accommodations and fare badly. It frequently happened that the cars in which they were hauled were hitched on to freight trains. This investigation did result in some improvement in accommodations but there still remains much to be done.

Owners of mines and of company stores are no less greedy and relentless than the padrones, and the tenement and sweatshop owners. An intensive study of the households of 2,371 miners

made by Government agents shows an average of $37.50 per month as the earnings of the heads of families. Practically all of these men are foreigners. Often the miner sees little cash in payment for his services, for the script, store-order or check system is common. If he has not mortgaged his prospective wages too heavily before quitting the agent's office in his own country he may in time be able to start a meager bank account. Then slack times come and another designing agent, usually of his own nationality, may persuade him that it is best for him to go home until the situation has improved here. This means another commission.

There are traps without number into which the community, by its selfish quiescence, permits our new arrivals to fall. A few immigrant societies are trying to stop some of these abuses, taking up in a small way a task that is too big for them and which should be handled by the Government itself. But the "interests" prevent that. The abuses in connection with naturalization, only one of the many counts against the Government, have been a burning scandal. The Mayor of

New York City, in a recent letter to the United States Attorney General, said: "When men cannot get naturalized without paying corruption money for it, they cannot be expected to feel otherwise than that the Government is corrupt throughout."

This criticism was in connection with the exposure of extortion from prospective citizens who applied for their papers at the Naturalization Bureau. For years applicants had commonly been forced to give money to get ahead in the waiting line in the Federal Building. After losing days of work the applicant who did not pay found himself further down the line than when he first applied. The men who have conducted this traffic have not been government officials, but outsiders who have taken advantage of the Government's inadequate facilities for handling the business. Abuse after abuse has been exposed in this connection and a few extra clerks were put on while the matter was being "stirred up."

As one writer said in an editorial when a naturalization bribe-taker was arrested: "The chief

offender is the United States. By not providing proper facilities for naturalization the Government flouts its own laws."

The placing of immigrants on farms is one of the greatest needs of the day. The over-population in the cities means heavy loss from preventable disease, and endless drain on the resources of the municipality in attempting to relieve the distress of the stranded armies of immigrants. A bureau has been organized within the past few years whose purpose was bravely announced to be the moving on of newly arrived aliens to the places where their labor is really needed. How little has been accomplished is apparent from the figures of a report by the Commissioner General which shows that of the 878,587 aliens admitted for the year which ended June 30, 1911, only 30,657 applicants received any information from this new Division of Information, and only 5,176 went direct to the place upon they were employed.

This division should be made one of the most important in the immigration service. Its chief is most anxious to do this but is not receiving the

support he should have from the Government. Its growth will have to be rapid to make any impression on the incoming armies. The head of the Division says officially:

> Able, healthy, willing workers have anxiously scanned the records of opportunities presented to them by the Division of Information only to turn away disappointed, for the most alluring of them lay at points hopelessly beyond their grasp because of financial inability to reach the destination. The Division of Information could have directed thousands of people to places where they could have secured employment on land were it not for the lack of means on the part ot applicants to pay traveling expenses.

A manager of one of the biggest fruit companies on the Pacific coast, a concern that employed 25,000 persons, told the writer that the greatest difficulty was experienced in obtaining sufficient labor. Seven months in the year the workers received $2.50 a day and for the other five $1.25 a day. Many thousands of the farm workers who land in New York are Southern Europeans who are good fruit growers, but, like other immigrants, they often do not have on arrival more than the necessary twenty-five dollars. New York is a long way from the Pacific coast.

Their little capital is quickly gone and they are lucky if they have been able to hang on to the skirts of some half-legitimate occupation. Were they helped to reach the farm lands that lie idle beyond the gateway, even in the Eastern States, what powerful factors they would be in redeeming barren acres. Farming in New York State alone has decreased in value $168,000,000 since 1880. Some of the railroads are now taking up the matter of the redemption of farm lands privately, but this too, is a work for the Government.

Someone will say: "Why, I know of an immigrant who went to a farm and stayed there only a month, then he was back in the city; what's the use?" But when we get at the real facts we usually find that the immigrant had no one about him who spoke his own language and that his employer, taking advantage of his ignorance and helplessness, drove him early and late and at the most meager wages. Little effort has been made by State or Government to place the immigrant where there is economic attraction. Groups of immigrants from the same country, when placed

on neighboring farms where coöperation was possible, granted that they knew anything at all about farming, or had any practical supervision, have invariably been successful.

And here it is important to correct a popular notion that it is useless to try to interest the Jews in agriculture. It is commonly said that they will never make farmers, that they prefer towns where there is more use for their wits and less for their hands. Such a statement is usually born of gross ignorance and bigotry and, in spite of experimental failures in other countries, needs great qualification. It is an assumption, based upon the past, rather than a fact, operative for the future. For the Jew had for centuries been dispossessed, he has forcibly been herded into towns and forbidden the land in many countries.

Take, for instance, the situation of the Russian Jew as we learn it from the immigrant. In line with other cruelties, its pogroms, its relentless persecutions and slaughters, the Russian Government will not permit Jews to buy, lease or manage real property except in the towns and

Flashlight picture on a hot night, showing tenement roof and fire escapes littered with men, women and children

cities within the Pale of Settlement. The Pale consists of fifteen provinces, a twenty-third part of the Empire. Here practically all the Jewish population, between five and six millions in number, is forced to live. There are only 200,000 Jews in Russia to-day who are tilling the soil. A movement to give the Jews in Russia a chance at the land, which began in the eighties, started them in this work. But this movement was comparatively short-lived, for the recent May laws have made it impossible for Jews further to develop established agricultural colonies or to start new ones within the limits of the Russian Empire. While Jewish artisans may live in almost all parts of Russia, they are prohibited from acquiring real estate outside the towns or cities of the Pale. The artisan's son, who lives outside, if he be not fortunate enough to have acquired the legal right of residence, must, on coming of age, go to the Pale. Many of their callings that were formerly classed as artisan are now declared to be non-artisan and the workers in these have been forced back to the Ghetto. This explains then why there are so few Jewish farmers and

why the vocations in which Russian Jews engage are seemingly limited to trading — they have been shut out of practically everything else in their native land.

That the Jews are successful when given a chance at the land is shown by the experiences of the Industrial Removal Office in New York which has transplanted a sufficiently large number of East Side workers to farms to show that they make most successful tillers of the soil. Many fresh arrivals are being sent to the hills of New England and to the valleys of Texas and to the nearer fields of New Jersey by the Removal Office and by other Jewish immigrant societies. Whenever they go to the farms in coöperative companies they are successful. In nine years the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Society loaned $648,921 for the purpose of establishing Jews on farms, and already more than $200,000 has been repaid. With the loans secured at legal rates of interest have gone advice and assistance of every sort. Social needs have been considered in this plan, as it is fully recognized that the isolated immigrant farmer suffers social

death. To-day, wits as well as hands are needed for the successful farmer and the Jew enjoys the employment of both. An agricultural paper is published in Yiddish, and in these colonies, the Jewish farmer has the companionship of his co-religionists. By these and other means he is secured from that starvation of the mind which is to him the most dreaded of all fates.

Before me at this moment is a letter from an East Side young man, a Jew, who is studying agriculture at the Woodbine (N. J.) colony, in which he says:—

> Our studies are those needed by the practical farmer to help him make his farm a success. The time spent here is worth while. My highest ambition in life is to possess a homestead on a farm run on a successful basis. My hopes and spirits are high. If it is possible for one man to work his way through college, it is also possible for another, and I am going to have that farm.

But while meager hundreds of men are distributed by these societies, hundreds of thousands are ceaselessly pouring in and are trampling out one another's life in the gateway.

How important then that the Government

should take up the distribution question in earnest and relieve the congestion of the cities with all the poverty, the extortion, the slavery, the death which it entails. The crowding in our dense alien colonies is making compulsory parasites of people who would be able helpers if given a chance in the open. Of the gain in population in the past ten years seventy-three per cent. was in cities of 25,000 and over, this while our farming country continues to be depopulated and our agricultural consumption seriously threatens to exceed our production. The head of one great railroad has said that we shall not see these things until starvation drives us to it.

CHAPTER VIII

LABELING THE BUSINESS

THERE is little virtue in dwelling on evil living conditions unless effective remedies are offered. Such remedies there are, but public apathy or ignorance on the one hand, and private interests on the other have thus far hindered their use. It is said that the total number of unnecessary deaths in London is as great each year as the total number of deaths in the English army during the three years of the Boer war. And yet the death rate for New York has averaged for the past five years about three points higher than that of London. The Health Commissioner of New York has declared that if medical science were enabled to-day to put into effect what it knows regarding hygiene and sanitation, the death rate could be cut in half. The tearing down of old houses in a certain section of Glasgow a few years ago, and the building of new

tenements to replace them reduced the death rate in that district from fifty-five per thousand to a little over fourteen. There are rookeries in some of our great American cities, quite as bad as any that ever existed in Glasgow.

The homes we have thus far visited in the crowded districts are those whose troubles have been due to poverty and all that poverty brings with it. But there are other things to be reckoned with in all this inhuman herding; the drunkenness among many of our native population, the constant spectacles of vice that pass before the children's eyes and are about them upon every side. There are homes, not those of newly arrived immigrants but of older residents, whose squalid surroundings foster amazing viciousness. That these crime-breeding places should be permitted to stand for a day shows a serious lack of authority in health, tenement, building and police departments. Let us look into a home of this type.

The presence of two children in a horror hole in Water Street came to the attention of the authorities recently quite by accident. For nine

months the brother and sister had been living there in company with seventy professional women beggars. They had been sleeping in a little compartment no bigger and no lighter than a coal bin. With lanterns and candles the officers had gone in early one morning to the rescue. The pitiful story in Court of the anæmic two whose faces belied their age by a dozen years led the writer to visit the place in company with a Society officer on the day following the raid. The premises were two dilapidated two-story and attic frame houses connected by a shed at the rear. These crazy structures were a relic of the wooden age in tenements, but by law they were permitted to stand. Crudely painted figures on little blocks of wood askew over the tilted door frames marked, the police told me, the storm center of more ambulance and patrol wagon calls than any other house in that precinct.

To knock, we found, was a needless ceremony. In a little vestibule boarded off from the front room sat three ragged crones, evidently waiting to engage a bed for the night. One grinned at sight of us, revealing two yellow tusks little more

unpleasant than her other features and, to our astonishment, she dropped a mock courtesy.

"Please, kind sirs," she wheedled, "will you not cross a lady's palm with silver?" And she stretched out a gaunt, grimy hand.

With a cackle she exhibited the coins to her envious companions. We passed the partitions to a cramped compartment and gradually made out, in the dim light of a smoky lamp, a dozen creatures with hideous faces, squatted about on shakedowns. There was a little stove on which a pot was boiling. A few of the hags shrank away, evidently thinking it was the police again, and two, whose faces had been deeply cut and bruised, retreated, cursing, to a stairway. One of the seated company volunteered in a conciliatory way:

"We just got back from work and are restin' a bit. There ain't nothing wrong about that?"

"They're always resting a bit when they are not fighting," remarked the agent.

Most of the company, however, showed little interest in the call and when we asked how it went with them, one arose, fork in hand, and, as

she tried the potatoes, replied: "Everything is all right. God is good to us."

The rickety stairs were so steep that it was a matter of pulling ourselves up rather than of walking. The wonder was how they managed it when they were drunk. On the landing at the top, and under a window most of whose glass had been replaced by rags and paper, lay a girl of not more than twenty in a besotted sleep. Degradation had worked fast, but it had not yet destroyed every good feature. A little more time, however, and that face would be as hideous as the others. The room just off the landing was divided into little black pens; each, however, rented as a "room" for two dollars a week. It was in one of those holes that the children had been found huddled with their father and three hags. The father, we learned, worked in a Fulton Street fish market and out of his wages of six dollars had paid something each week for the maintenance of the little boy and girl. The mother had disappeared about a year before. In another "room" we found the landlady trying to rouse the occupant of a

cot who was sleeping off the effects of "third rail" whiskey, famous in that neighborhood. The sleeper finally raised herself on an elbow, looked dazedly at the visitors and sighed:

"I wish I was married."

"Umph, is that all that's a-troubling ye, Sadie?" remarked the landlady.

"Yes, it's awful lonesome livin' this way," and the lonesome lady sank back on the cot into sleep and snores again while we interviewed the hostess. The latter was sixty, sober, and business-like. Her only concern was lest we had come to arrest Sadie and take her away before she had paid for her lodgings.

The business of the harboring the women was quite profitable, we learned, and the landlady had a good sized bank account. The ordinary lodgers paid ten cents a night. This, with the money that came from the "roomers," gave her a nice profit, although she was obliged to pay seventy dollars a month for rent. The landlady finally produced a key and led us to her room. It was luxurious by way of contrast. There was a carpet, a bed with white spread and pillow

shams, some faded prints and a crucifix on the walls. The lodgers, she told us, were never admitted here; we were privileged visitors. And yet one lodger did penetrate into her sanctuary one night some weeks after our visit and stabbed the landlady through the heart as she slept, gathered up the week's receipts and fled out into the night.

Some of her "girls," as the landlady told us, made snug sums from their infirmities, faked or real, and their street corner pleas for charity. The "third-rail joints," she admitted, got most of it.

As we descended the perilous stairs we were stopped by a weazened woman with a beard on her chin. She had begged fifteen cents from us a little while before "for tobacco," but she had a flask and was dancing now "to show how young" she was.

"They're just getting tuned up for the night," observed the officer. "It will not be long before they are dragging one another around by the hair."

As we stepped out into the open and breathed

in the cold air it all seemed to have been a horrible dream. But this was the home of the two pitiful children and it will be long before the memories of the orgies, the brutalities of the place will be effaced from their impressionable minds.

As has been stated it was only by accident that the case of these two little unfortunates came to the attention of the authorities. It is true that a place like this of the beggars is exceptional and it was torn down sometime after our visit, yet we cannot but wonder how many more children are living in conditions just as horrible that no accident has yet revealed to the courts. There are thousands of them in cellars in New York who do not figure in the police or society records, but who do figure big in the mortality reports. Their parents and guardians are not drunkards. In fact there is comparatively little drunkenness in the dense alien colonies; that is chiefly the vice of native Americans. The trouble is not with inefficient or corrupt officials, but with a sleeping public. New York to-day has a most capable and conservative Tenement

House Commissioner who is doing all within his power to remedy conditions but his power is not big enough.

A recent report of the Tenement House Department showed that there were in New York City 25,387 basement or cellar tenements. Of these cellar homes 14,791 were in Manhattan alone. The law contains no restriction as to the number of cellar "apartments" which may exist in a tenement erected prior to April 10, 1901. As illustrating something of the conditions the Committee on the Congestion of Population recently cited a cellar in a block bounded by Catherine, Monroe, Market and Hamilton Streets where twenty families lived.

The mother of one of these families was in the Children's Court not long ago pleading for the release of one of her five children, an eleven-year-old boy, who had been arrested for selling newspapers on the street at midnight. None of her children had been able to get enough schooling to entitle him to a badge from the Department of Education permitting him to sell papers. But within one year there had been eight ar-

rests of her children for selling newspapers without permits and in prohibited hours.

"What can I do?" pleaded the poor woman. "We have not enough money to pay the rent."

The father and grandfather had a little butcher shop in the neighborhood. The rent for their shop and the cellar hole where they lived aggregated thirty-eight dollars a month. The biggest profit they had made in any one week in two years was eleven dollars. An aged grandmother was trying to help by finishing men's pants. She told me with some little pride that they were "policemen's pants" and that she got twelve cents a pair for them. That was a good price, as such work goes. The rate paid usually depends on the condition of the labor market and the hunger in the stomachs of the workers; and as overcrowding of population means a market always over-supplied the prices are always correspondingly meager. The grandmother, favored as she might be by the higher rate of compensation, was never able to finish more than five pairs a day. Her bent shoulders, worn hands, and dull eyes told better

than her words how hard was her drudgery. The family of nine, including the grandparents, was not able to live on the combined earnings of the shop and those of the grandmother. The butcher business did not even pay the rent of the cellar and the shop. So there was little wonder the children were sent into the streets to sell newspapers, even though it was against the law. It was that or starvation.

The bad air of the cellar is certain to lead to the illness of some member of that family before long. Then they will be forced to visit the Charity Department. And in many cases after the first application for public aid there is a final weakening of whatever self-respect the mills of greed have not ground out, and, giving up the fight, the family become willing paupers.

The death rate of the second generation of foreigners in the congested districts of New York, as shown by Health Department investigations, is much higher than the death rate of their parents. In one square block, inhabited chiefly by Italians, it was found in 1906 that the children

under the age of five years were dying off at the rate of 92.2 per thousand. In another square block it was 87.03 per thousand. There is a wide difference in the mortality and death rates among children of different nationalities. The Jewish children withstand disease better than the children of Italian parents. The Italians have a mortality from measles almost five times greater than that of the children of any other nationality. The death rate from bronco-pneumonia among Italian children reaches more than seven and one-half times the rate among children of American parents. Experts have long been warning us that the death rate in the crowded districts will go mounting up unless we let more light and air into the tenements. They tell us that in every building there should be at least 400 cubic feet for every adult and 300 cubic feet for every child under twelve years of age. The provision of 300 cubic feet of air space for each tenement dweller is all that is required now by law, and we know that the law is commonly violated.

How much better would be the building of

practical model tenements — those already built often rent for sums far beyond the reach of the people for whom they were meant — better than the erection of libraries, and yes, I was about to say even hospitals. For if we gave the people of these districts better conditions we would not need so many hospitals. This does not for a moment mean that the people should be pauperized. But if philanthropists would provide houses that had light, air, and a chance for cleanliness, and at a rent reasonable from the standpoint of the tenant's earnings, what enduring monuments they would be raising to themselves. The proper housing of one human being is a greater help to the community than the monumental housing of a ton of books.

It has been demonstrated by Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt through her recently erected East River Homes, in which about 300 families are housed, that it is possible to provide bright, airy, sanitary apartments, equipped with electric lights, steam heat and baths at rents that are no higher than those charged for some of the old cold-water, no-heat black room flats in the rook-

eries. These houses were not built to make money but were intended primarily as homes for tuberculosis convalescents and their construction had to meet peculiar requirements. To-day there are convalescents in them who pay no rent. The tenants who are able-bodied and work pay as much perhaps as tenants elsewhere, but it is to be remembered there are no coal nor light bills to be met and they live comfortably in sanitary and attractive surroundings. Further experience in the building of this type of houses will undoubtedly make possible lower rents in them.

But, as we have tried to make plain, this is not, after all, a proposition so much for private philanthropy as for public service. It is for the municipality itself to regulate the matter of the tenements by adequate laws and their enforcement. We may appoint investigating commissions, organize civic study clubs, declare that it is all shocking and forget about it next day, and the same things — slavery and murder are their real names — will go right on as long as public conscience sleeps.

There is a pitiful lack of autonomy in the

city departments that should be able to act quickly and decisively on evil living conditions. To illustrate we shall cite a case that was recently brought to our attention. A family of seven was found living in two small rooms within a stone's throw of the Children's Court and in a fearful condition of filth and squalor. One of the five children was a seventeen-year-old boy, an imbecile and paralytic from birth, who lay in a tin bath tub which the parents had provided. He was entirely helpless and had not been moved from the tub, as the parents admitted, in weeks. Besides the human inhabitants there were chickens and pigeons in the small rooms. While the parents worked in a neighboring pickle factory a girl thirteen years old was supposed to look after the helpless imbecile as well as to minister to the wants of the smaller children. When we called there was a red hot stove in the place and not a window open. Holding our breath we stepped into the rooms when a rooster coming from under a bed flew to the edge of the tub in which the imbecile lay and perching there an instant crowed lustily.

A hen was pecking from a dish on the floor in which there was a dirty mixture of bread and milk, evidently intended as food for the unfortunate boy. When we fled to the hallway for air the agent told me that these conditions had existed ever since the family moved in, six months before.

The agent took all the children, except the unfortunate creature in the tub, to the Society rooms on a charge of improper guardianship. As the boy was over sixteen years old the agent had no jurisdiction in his case. We asked the neighbors why he had not been sent to a hospital. They told us the parents feared hospitals and would never consent to his being taken away. We went to the pickle factory, found the parents who resented deeply the interference of the Society and declared they would never consent to the boy's removal. They declared he was receiving medical attention and when we asked who the doctor was they gave us the name of a veterinary. Here existed a flagrant menace to the health of the other tenants in the house, as well as to the entire neighborhood.

About the only breathing spaces these children have are the malodorous courts with their unspeakable surroundings, which seldom get direct sunlight

The Charities Department was told of the situation in detail.

"We can only place the boy in a hospital," was the reply of that department, "if the parents will consent; otherwise we can do nothing."

To the Tenement House Department we turned next. No, that department would do nothing, it had no jurisdiction in such a case; it probably belonged to the Department of Charities, or the Department of Health. The latter department was tried next. They listened patiently, but their answer was discouraging.

"We can take out the pigeons and the chickens, it is against the law to keep them in a flat." The policeman on post declared that he had no authority to move the boy unless the parents agreed. They had gone back to the pickle factory. I never eat a pickle now without thinking of that house.

Failing to receive coöperation from any city department we finally made bold to summon an ambulance ourselves. Against the protests of the surgeon the lad was finally taken to Bellevue Hospital. The authorities there said if the

parents were so disposed they could take the boy home as soon as they discovered his whereabouts. Within twenty-four hours he was back again in the tub, but at any rate he had had a bath. The younger children were committed, of course, to a proper institution, but so far as the removal of the nuisance went, all our complaints had accomplished was the eviction of the pigeons and the chickens. Any one of the departments mentioned should have had the authority to have forced the immediate vacation of the premises. It should be within their power to close or demolish any house where a condition is found to exist that is likely to cause sickness or to render the place unfit for human habitation.

What a furbishing, a re-building and activity there would be in the tenement districts if a plan recently brought forward by the Rev. Father James Curry were placed upon the statute books — that every owner should be forced to place on his tenement a small sign giving his name in plain letters! This was proposed to the Congestion Commission and immediately

some leading citizens were frightened to the verge of prostration. No man wanted to see his rickety, black, airless, cold-water death trap stand out as a monument to his greed. To-day he may hide behind the lessees —"leassors," as their victims call them — the agents or dummies. If the owners' names appear at all on official records they are hidden deep under legal verbiage and safe from the ordinary layman's discovery. The tenant, more often than not, knows nothing of the real owner's identity. The only landlord he knows is the agent or janitor, each steel-sheathed to any appeals.

"Why, think of the blackmail we'd be liable to!" exclaimed some of the owners when the label proposition was broached. There is humor in this protest, in the unconsciousness of its confession. These gentlemen were growing fearful for their position in church, society or profession. They were asked if their names did not appear upon their business offices, and if that fact laid them open to blackmail. Oh, no, they answered — but of course with the tenements it was different. Why? If a man's

business and his goods are honest, why should he be afraid to label them?

It was after one of these hearings that the writer went to a luncheon given by a number of avowed philanthropists and to consider some charitable object. There he was buttonholed by a tenement owner and "philanthropist," who spoke with extreme feeling of the ill effects to property owners of the proposed law and begged that he use all his influence against it. Perhaps this charitable gentleman kept his sense of consistency, along with other valuables, in safe deposit vaults; but as for the writer, if he could have his way, the label law would go into effect to-morrow.

There should be a law, too, limiting the number of sweatshops and factories which are operated in a given area — especially places of the type that deals with piece work done in the home. The idea that workers should live in the outskirts while their shops are in the crowded districts may be good in theory, but it is almost impossible in practice. When every penny and every second counts, you cannot afford to spend

five-cent pieces and half-hours traveling back and forth between home and shop. The people can move only when the shops move. Some businesses have gone to the suburbs, the workers with them, and almost invariably the industry as well as the workers has profited by the change. The community has profited most of all.

The seriousness of the problem of the congestion of industries is apparent when it is stated that in one assembly district in New York, the Sixth, a little area of eighty-six acres, comprising one and three-tenths per cent. of the total area of Manhattan, there are found massed twelve per cent. of all the factories on that island and nearly twelve per cent. of the workers. In a single block bounded by Prince, Crosby, Broadway and East Houston Streets, with an area of only three and three-tenths acres, there were seventy-seven factories in 1908 with 4,007 workers, a density of more than 1,200 workers to the acre. About half the buildings there were twelve stories in height. Ninety-seven per cent. of the area was covered with buildings and

the land was worth more than one million dollars an acre.

Why should not the factories and homes of those workers be moved out where land is cheaper and where there is more working and living space? The verdict of physicians and experts who have studied the problem is that 500 cubic feet of air space should be provided for every employé in a factory in the daytime, and that each night worker should have not less than 600 cubic feet of air space. To-day, under the factory law in New York, only 250 cubic feet of air space are allowed for each worker. Space has money value, but what a miserably cheap appraisal our greed for money leads us to place on a human life. Surely it is within the police power of the State to adopt and enforce measures for the protection of the health of its largest numbers.

The remedies already indicated, together with others, to safeguard the health of families and the morals of children were proposed to the legislature in New York recently after the Congestion Committee had spent many weeks taking

testimony. But not one item for relief was permitted to go on the statute books. The delinquent community slept while the real estate interests and the professional politicians who did their bidding strangled every measure submitted. In the meantime the herding of human beings into the black holes goes increasingly on, with the consequent slavery, corruption of children, pauperism and death.

CHAPTER IX

THE DELINQUENT PARENT

IT is the delinquent child who is formally arraigned before the judge, but often the real offender is the parent. The varieties of parental delinquency as revealed in the Children's Courts are endless, and it would seem that one day there must be penal institutions and reformatories for delinquent parents. Drastic treatment is required to work any change in them for they are not the plastic material that we find the children. And yet more often than not it is again the community that is responsible.

The poverty and the oppressive conditions fostered by congestion are, of course, large factors in producing helpless and vicious parents. There is often parental love and sacrifice in the tenements, however, far exceeding that known in some luxurious homes. The majority of poor parents do the best they can for their chil-

dren in spite of the ceaseless grind that is their lot. And, as is frequently shown in the Children's Courts, not all the bad parents come from the houses of poverty; numbers of them live in the richest sections.

It is true that among the toilers many think only of the day when the child may be put to work. But there are parents just as selfish, just as brutal among the rich. Here the father is too much engrossed in money getting, the mother too occupied with her social ambitions to spend time in thinking of the children whose entire care and training are left to paid employés. And once in a while, the child of this up-bringing rebels, deserts his unsuccessful home and winds up in the Children's Court.

The mother of one lad who had burglarized six houses in as many weeks explained to the Court that she had been so busy with social engagements that she had no time left to look after her son. The father of another boy who had run away from his home on Riverside Drive admitted to the Judge that his son was gone three days before the servants and the tutor thought

it worth while to tell him. The mother was spending the winter in a Florida hotel. Although he slept under the same roof with the boy, the father was often "so busy" he did not see him for a week at a time. The growing laxity of rich and poor in their regard for parental responsibility demands serious thought.

While there are many parents in the alien colonies who are anxious to railroad their children off to institutions on trumped-up charges, and thus shift to the State the burden of maintenance until the law permits them to work, there is a corresponding class of wealthy parents who are just as anxious to rid themselves of the care of their progeny. The institution chosen by this latter class of parents is of course the boarding school. It is astonishing at what an early age many of these socially busy mothers are anxious to ship off their boys and girls. There are many excellent boarding schools that deservedly take high rank in the educational system; the heads of many of them do inestimable good; but the usefulness of others has been estimated solely by the rate of

tuition. The head of one such private school, not far from New York, who allowed his boys to have their own automobiles and to spend their nights at the Haymarket instead of at their books, when questioned recently, declared that he was "not running a Sunday school." He said that as long as the fathers paid the bills — and in the absence of any explicit instructions from them — the boys could do as they pleased. He added: "These boys haven't any more comforts in their own homes than they have right here. There isn't a single thing they can't have if they want it." One cannot help thinking that the charitable institution maintained by the State, the poor man's boarding school, is a safer place for a boy's moral and physical development than such a school as this one.

A richly gowned woman led her sad and absurdly dressed little girl into the Children's Court recently. She wanted summonses — summonses for a lot of her neighbor's children.

"They have insulted my angel," declared the mother when she came before the Judge.

"They've taunted her and taunted her about her hair!"

The Court surveyed the sad little girl.

"Take off the child's hat," ordered the Judge.

Head-gear, years too old for the child, was removed, and then, to the amazement of all, hair once black, but now of straw color, was revealed. The mother had bleached the hair of her eleven-year-old daughter.

"I am sorry that the taunts of the neighbors' children were not directed solely at you, Madam," declared the Court; "you are the one who should suffer."

The Court continued with terse, emphatic statements while the mother, summonsless, hurried away with her angel. Her startled look as she fled the building showed that her shallow mind was working in a way entirely new. But that was not the end of it; the Court had that home, in an expensive apartment, investigated. The parents were placed under supervision with the result that to-day the child is getting something like a fair chance in life.

Much of the parental helplessness found in

the alien colonies and the congested districts is due to ignorance, to want and its attendant ills. None of these excuses can be urged for the parents in materially fortunate homes. But it was neither ignorance nor poverty that led the mother of Jakie recently to make a charge of an "ungovernable child" against him.

As Jakie stood before the Judge his nose just touched the rail of the bench. His mother, fat, hatless, in dirty calico dress, a shawl over her shoulders, and with big diamond earrings in her ears, had volubly told on the stand all of his grievous sins. Jakie would not go to school, he often stayed out until two or three o'clock in the morning, he was disobedient and the mother declared he "was no good." An investigation of his school record showed that he had been absent ninety-three days since the beginning of the term.

"Why don't you go to school?" the Judge asked.

As Jakie shook his head, the tip of his nose rubbed back and forth on the rail. The Court waited patiently. Jakie did not answer.

"I do not want to send you away, but I'll have to return you to the Society until you can make up your mind to talk to me."

The defendant still rubbed his nose, back and forth on the rail. This was a new sensation and gave him profound amusement, to judge from the expression of his face.

"Now, Jakie, this is your last chance to-day, I have many cases waiting — are you going to answer me or not?"

The vibration of Jakie's head did not cease at once, but in a moment he cast a furtive glance at the Court. That was sufficient, the Court was not to be trifled with. Then he threw back his head and declared desperately:

"The teacher says I stink!"

The Court arose and took a more careful inventory of Jakie.

"We had to soak and scrub that boy for two hours when he was brought to the rooms this morning," declared the Society's representative, "and I don't believe we've got all the dirt off yet." He pointed to a dark line beneath the hair that had been close-cropped. "I guess it

will take sandpaper before that job is finished," was the agent's observation.

The Court in its thorough examination finally discovered that the mother and father of this boy were human leeches, "leassors," as they are known to their poor tenement victims. They were the lessees or extortion agents who ground the rent out of the tenants of two big houses, one in Rivington and the other in Clinton streets. The real owner lived uptown in one of the fashionable neighborhoods. The diamond earrings of Jakie's mother attested the success with which she and her husband carried on the business. They were not satisfied, however, with their income and it was the parents who were responsible for the boy's being out so late each night; they forced him to sell papers. They cared little whether he went to school or not, and because of the loss of sleep the boy found school work so hard that he had been on "the hook," as he confessed, most of the time. The mother and father had absolutely no regard for his physical condition and although the rooms they occupied in Rivington Street were fairly

comfortable and there was no dearth of water in their apartment, such as existed throughout the other flats in the house, Jakie could not remember when he had had a bath or even had his face washed in his own home. It was little wonder that his presence in class on the few days that he did attend school was rather disconcerting to the teacher and to the other pupils. The truant officers had long been struggling with these parents, and when they finally saw that it would no longer be possible to profit from the boy's sales of papers they decided to send him away and rid themselves of his support. But it did not work out quite as easily as they had imagined. Not only Jakie, but his two brothers and sister were committed to an institution because of improper guardianship. And to the immense surprise and dismay of the parents an order was entered by the Court against the father to pay to the city $2.35 a week for the maintenance of each child, exactly what it costs the city to keep them in the institutions to which they were committed.

Another mother of this type when told by the

Court that her boy had been absent from school for one solid year and asked to explain, expressed mild surprise and replied with a shrug of her shoulders:

"Does he vant to be a lawyer, does he vant to be a doctor?"

Still another mother when informed that her hopeful had been a truant for seven months offered the excuse:

"Maybe he wasn't feeling good."

A great, hulking, six foot Austrian applied to the Children's Court for a warrant for his son. He declared that the boy would not go to school, smoked cigarettes, and added with outraged feelings:

"He makes bad talk at me."

To the Court's question as to the boy's age, the father replied gravely that he was all of eight.

"Do you mean to tell me that a giant like you can't handle an eight-year-old boy?" demanded the Court.

The father calmly shook his head.

"Don't you ever punish him?"

"Every time I go near that boy he threatens to jump off the roof and kill himself," was the reply.

In such fear too, of his tiny son was this six-footer that he would not undertake to bring him to court but wanted an officer to go after him with a warrant. The giant seemed to have lost several inches in stature when the Court finished with him.

Unbelievable as it may seem, there have been mothers who admitted to the Court that they did not know how many children they had. One mother when asked as to the size of her family answered:

"Me no know. I stop count when I got 'leven." Then, with a sniff she asked:

"What de diff?"

It didn't seem to make much difference to her, but it did to the State. An attempt to round up the children of this family, fourteen in number, led the investigators into pool rooms, which were really Fagin schools, barrel dives, dance halls, moving picture places and institutions — the natural results of being mothered only by the streets.

The pavements are their only green fields and these children are doing the best they can to indulge the normal play instinct

Someone will say this is a proof of the law of heredity. Not at all; these children were victims of an environment for which the parents were chiefly responsible. It was not a blood taint from within working out, but a contamination from without working in.

The son of a religious teacher was arrested for picking pockets. His skill was attained after months of training.

"Didn't you know that your boy was spending most of his time with a gang of thieves?" asked the Court.

"No, I am so busy with my teaching I didn't have time to look after my boy," replied the father.

Can there be any question about the need of a penal institution for such parents as these?

And as rather a refreshing note in all the tragedy we may add this letter from one of the children anxious to supplement parental incompetence for his own benefit:

"Judge, please tell my mother to keep me in. If she keeps me in I'll stay all right: I won't go out, then I won't get in any more trouble."

Often in the densely congested districts, and particularly in the alien colonies, the father and mother who have had a boy committed to an institution — regardless of the charge — are looked upon with envy by their neighbors. Many a child has unwittingly told of the collusion by which his parents hoped to have him "put away." Fortunately the laws have been amended in some States so that the courts may, at their discretion, place the father of a child sent to an institution under an order to pay in whole or in part for his maintenance. If the father is able to pay and does not obey the order he may be sent to prison. This legislation has done much to cut down the number of false charges made by parents against their own children. But even with these precautions, strange resourcefulness is at times displayed in efforts to force the State to care for children until they have attained working age and the parents can safely profit by the child's earnings.

A woman with a seven-months-old baby in her arms applied to one of the bureaus of the Charities Department for help and for the commitment

of the infant. She told a story of a husband dying at home of consumption, of everything having been pawned to provide food and medicine. If the city would take the child she would be able to go out to work. An examiner was sent hurrying down to the dingy tenement. After climbing five flights of stairs he found the dying consumptive, the woman and her baby in a room that had been stripped of everything except the bed in which the man lay, the covers on it and a wooden leg conspicuously near. Asked about the wooden leg the mother weepingly told how her husband had met with a blasting accident before the consumption had developed. The combination of misfortunes as related by the woman made the examiner suspicious. He lifted the covers at the foot of the bed. Two legs were revealed, both just as sound as legs on a consumptive in that stage of the disease could be. The consumptive was not the husband of the woman, neither was he the father of the child. He was a neighbor who had hired out his services for the day. The wooden leg belonged to a professional mendicant who lived

in the next block. He had no use for it on this particular day. In fact he used it only occasionally on Sundays when he went for a day's outing and stumped up and down the boardwalk at Coney Island. All of his "working" time was spent on a busy street corner with his stump of a leg extended while he caught in his hat the pennies of the sympathizing passers-by. The mendicant had originally obtained the leg from the city's charity. Nor had the plot to deceive the city been the product of real poverty in this case, for the father had steady employment at fair wages.

Desertion, carefully pre-arranged by parents in order to get their children into the "collegio" or the "waisenhaus," is a growing evil with which the charities bureaus have to contend. As has been said, the courts have some means of dealing with those who try to shift the burden of the child's maintenance upon the State. But in these cases of family desertion coming before the Charities Department there is no efficient remedy. And it is another result of pernicious living conditions and of poverty in the crowded

districts. The family is unable to live on the sweatshop wage or on the peddler's meager income. The big family is a millstone about the parental neck. The father disappears. The mother and the children, perhaps a half-dozen or more, apply at the end of the month to the Children's Bureau of the Department of Charities. She is about to be dispossessed, they are without food. There is nothing to do but to send all the children, save one, to charitable institutions, there to be supported by the city. By an arbitrary rule of the Department an only child or the last child will not be taken away from a mother. Employment will be provided where she can take this child. But the city has now relieved the family of five children. Within another month or two, perhaps the mother has disappeared. She has known all along where her husband was and probably he has been sending her money through friends. He has changed his name and perhaps has been working in a coal cellar or a sweatshop in another colony of his own nationality. It may be he has gone to a near-by city. At any rate the father and mother re-unite in time.

They are rid of all but one of their children and the city is forced to support the others for years in one of its institutions.

There are numerous desertions of wives and children, too, by fathers who are not considerate enough to consult their wives about it first. The desertion habit is growing so that the charity authorities are alarmed at it. So effectively are the deserters concealed in the mazes of crowded colonies that it is seldom they are caught. The cost to New York County alone for the maintenance of children committed to its various public institutions is considerably more than two millions a year. Ten thousand children are proposed to the Children's Bureau of that one county each year for commitment, and between twenty-five and thirty per cent. of these cases arise, according to the head of that Bureau, from family desertion. It is added by the same authority that twenty-five per cent. of those applying for the commitment of their children have never taken the first steps toward becoming citizens.

The readiness with which parents of the de-

linquent type turn to an accommodating municipality to save them the trouble of controlling their own children is shown by the following letter recently addressed to the "Hon. Superintendent of the Children's Courts":

Dear Sir:

I call your immediate attention in my child 12 years old who was 18 months in your institute. He go no school and give too much noise everybody. I beg you send a policeman and send him again in Penitentiary.

With best regards, I am,

Yours respectfully,

W—— G——

The wording of this appeal may be unique but its spirit is common. It is apparent from the letter that this solicitous parent's son was not more than ten and a half when he was first sent to an institution. Sometimes such parents haul six-year-old infants to court as incorrigibles in the ingenuous belief that they are thus going to be rid of them. It is such parents, too, who do much toward bolstering up the birth rate that Fifth Avenue fails to support.

There are occasional parents who lock their

children in or tie them up when they are to be away from home. Four forlorn little creatures were discovered last summer locked in a flat where they had been left for five days while the father and mother were having a vacation at Coney Island. The eldest child, a little girl of eleven, had been ordered to do the cooking and to take care of the house. Then there is the more common class of parents who are so greedy for money that they send their children to work in violation of law and take every cent from them at the end of the week. Working boys have sometimes confessed that they have stolen because their parents had not even allowed them car-fare. It is against the law in New York for children to peddle, and yet there is scarcely a busy corner in the downtown sections where children may not be seen daily offering various wares for sale. The parents in nearly every case know that these youngsters are peddling and that it is in violation of law. It is the parents, too, who usually get all the profits.

A father, one of whose sons had been sent to an institution because of persistent peddling in

violation of law, had a second son arrested for a similar offense.

"And you are back here again after all I told you?" exclaimed the Judge on seeing this parent. "You were warned what would happen if you sent your boys out to peddle."

"Yes, but that was the other boy. You sent him away. This boy was never here before."

Then there are the parents who profit by the stealings of their children. A majority of them, perhaps, have not deliberately taught their children to steal, but by accepting without question the money that has been turned over to them they are, of course, morally guilty. Occasionally a boy is found who has confessed that his own father and mother have instructed him in the gentle art of grand larceny. But in the majority of cases the little pickpockets have been trained by outsiders.

A woman appeared in the Children's Court to complain that her son's boy companion had stolen eight hundred and twenty-four dollars from her. The money had in reality been stolen by the two boys, who were skillful pickpockets,

from the chatelaine bag of a lady walking through Fourteenth Street. It happened that the victim of the larceny was a woman of title who was on a visit to New York; that possibly accounts for the fact that she had so much money in her purse at one time. The real trouble in the mind of the mother who was the complaining witness, was that she and her son had not received a full share of the booty from the other boy. She believed that if she threatened him with arrest she would succeed in getting an equal division. The complaining mother, of course, did not say anything about the pocket picking, evidently believing that as the other boy was guilty too he would be afraid to mention it. She simply alleged that the money had been taken from her home by her son's companion. It was a bold stroke but it failed, for after a careful investigation the whole story came out. Both boys were sent to reformatories, such of the stolen money as was left was returned to the owner and the complaining mother was sent to prison. But this, of course, is one of the uncommon forms of parental crime. As to the

pickpockets, they form a study in themselves and will be the subject of a later chapter.

Here have been set down just a few things that may serve to shed a little light on parental delinquency.[1]

There are thousands of delinquent parents — some selfish, some slothful, some neglectful, and many of them not deserving of much sympathy. The criticism is sometimes made that a too willing State, in the profusion of its bureaucratic ac-

[1] Among the instances of extreme cruelty this affidavit sent to the Society needs no comment: "This is to certify that I have this day made a physical examination of the person of L—— D——, aged 9 years, of —— Avenue A, Manhattan, and found the following injuries:

Back: Six (6) contusions from 1″ square to 2″x3″ in area.
Chest: Two (2) contusions 2″ square.
Right Arm: One (1) contusion, ¾″ square.
One (1) abrasion, ½″ square.
Left Arm: One (1) contusion extending from shoulder to forearm 11″ by 4″ in area, made up of many contusions interlacing.
Two (2) abrasions, ½″ square.
Right Leg: One (1) 2″x3″ in area.
Left Leg: Thirteen (13) contusions from 1½″ square to 2″x3″ in area.

These injuries are about one week old and were caused, in my opinion, by an assault with some weapon.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed) W. Travers Gibb,
Examining Physician.

It was the mother who had used the weapon.

tivities, is breaking down parental obligation. But how, when such neglect and indifference as we have described exists, can the State refuse to step in? For, after all, our hope lies in the children. The home is the place for the child, and the father and mother should be his best guardians. The home must be bad indeed not to be better than the best institution ever created; it is the natural growing place for the young human being. And yet present day living conditions among rich and poor in the great cities do seem to be breaking down much of the good, old-fashioned notions of parental responsibilities.

CHAPTER X

THE CHILD OF BONDAGE

THERE are more than two million children in this country whose future effciency is being imperiled by the labor that is forced from them before they are old enough to toil. The exploitation of child labor in sweatshop, tenement, factory and mine is a national crime. The bones of these children are not yet hardened, their muscles and their brains are still unformed; yet they are forced to work at loom and furnace, breaker and needle, sacrificing future health and usefulness under the pressure of man's greed. Fatigue results in muscular degeneration, their minds are either stunted or warped, and the result we too often see in the adult is a dangerous revolt against society. This vast army of pitiful child toilers suffers from a triple affliction; the selfishness of employers, the ignorance of parents and the neglect

of the State, for it is a subject with which the State should deal.

From the shrimp packing houses of the Gulf to the cotton mills of New England, these children, many thousands of them hardly in their teens, are having their growth stunted, their bones made crooked, their backs bent, by toil that belongs to men. One hundred years ago England tried to build up a great industry on the labor of little children through excessive hours. She is still paying the price. The same evil is here to-day and it is enfeebling national vitality.

It is only within the past decade that anything like a general movement has been started for the regulation of child labor — and this by private organizations. The National Child Labor Committee has made some impression on the bulwarks set up by the industrial interests in the various States. But to show how strongly these interests are still intrenched we have but to turn to the spectacle of Florida. Here a child labor bill has been fought by the packing industries who argued that the five- and six-

year-old children working in the shrimp and oyster canneries needed no protection because the work was not hard — besides, the children were not Florida children, but were "little foreigners from Baltimore." These children, some of them mere babies, have regularly been imported into Florida at the opening of the packing season. The sharp oyster shells cut their fingers, the acid or some secretion in the shrimp ate away the skin and the tender flesh. And as a great concession the packers offered an amendment to the child labor bill — that instead of protecting children under fourteen years, the age limit should be made *eight* years for all industries. This, presumably, they thought would serve to keep the agitators quiet.

In our great cities thousands of children are being transformed into old men and women before they are out of their teens by the strain of piece work done in the homes. The industry in which the children of the tenements are chiefly exploited is that of finishing ready-made garments. New York is the great garment making center of the world. But there are many other

lines in which the labor of children of tender years is employed.

The manufacturers who profit by home labor are ever ready to fight any proposition to upset it. By the spreading of their factories through innumerable bedrooms and kitchens they are saving rent, light, heat and furnishings as well as the cost of shop supervision. They are also saving themselves from liability for employing children under the legal working age. It is impossible for factory inspectors to invade the homes and take away the little children employed there. Conviction cannot easily be obtained against the contractor who has sent his piece work into these bedrooms and kitchens. His easy argument is that the work is intended for the parents and that if they choose to enlist the aid of their children it is their own affair: and he is not responsible.

So it is that the home-work system has been spreading until any observer going through the crowded tenement streets may see in every block women and children bearing great bundles between workshop and home. The evils of the sys-

tem are its life. The unrestricted hours of work and the employment of children are the things that make it profitable for the manufacturer. There is a sliding scale of wages but they always slide downward. In proportion to the urgency of the needs of the applicant for piece work the wage is lowered.

A family of five was recently found huddled in a hall bedroom binding roses into garlands for ladies' hats; they got ten cents for every 720 roses made into garlands. Were it possible for the consumer to see under what conditions some goods are made rushes at the bargain counters would not be so frequent.

The making of willow plumes for a time was an extensive tenement industry. This work consists in tying to every strand of a good ostrich feather two strands stripped from inferior feathers and involves the tying of innumerable delicate knots; it is paid for by the inch measured on the stem of the original feather. One investigator of the National Child Labor Committee reported that the workers received one cent for every forty-one of these delicate knots

tied. It required from one and one-half to two days to make an eighteen-inch feather. For this the worker received about seventy-five cents. In the stores such a feather costs from eight and a half to twenty-five dollars according to the quality of the material.

Children have frequently been found tucking and putting together children's white dresses at fifty cents a dozen. The retail price of these same dresses in the stores has been found to be $1.69 apiece. An official investigation recently found that the average earnings of home-workers' families in the clothing trade was $3.67 a week, while the artificial flower makers earned $2.07 a week. A Government report on the situation in New York says: "The compensation which the home-workers receive for their labor is, as a rule, such that they do not earn enough to provide even the shelter, food and raiment essential to maintain a moderate standard of physical efficiency."

The "finishing" on which many women and children are employed in New York means whatever hand sewing is necessary to complete the

garment after the operating and basting have been done. It consists usually in felling the lining to the cloth, where this has not already been done by machine. When this work is done in the homes it is called "home finishing." Coat finishing usually consists in felling the lining at the arm holes, at the bottom and at the neck; sometimes the part turned up at the bottom is herring-boned; frequently the under collar is also felled on and, on higher grade garments, the collar is "stoted," a distinctive sort of felling. Frequently the finisher is required to pull out the bastings also.

The finisher on pants has to line the pants at the waist line, fell the lining at the top, tack it at the pocket, and sometimes fell the pocket at the seam; put the rubber composition in the portion of the leg which is turned up to form the bottom — although the bottoms may be felled by a separate shop hand. Frequently the home-worker has to sew the buckles to the buckle strap and sew on the buttons.

Many believe that home finishing is confined to a cheap grade of garments or to such as are

made by contractors. This notion is wrong. It is resorted to by the makers of all grades of ready-made clothing, by leading manufacturers who maintain large inside shops as well as by the small contractors. Even with firms that advertise "No sweatshop goods. All goods made in our own shops" much of the finishing, according to a Government report, is done in homes.

A friend of the writer one day followed an Italian woman who was staggering along under a load of unfinished clothing for blocks. She was forced to stop now and then to get breath, resting the load she carried on her head against the side of a building. She did not dare lower it to the sidewalk for fear she would not be able again to get under the burden. She dragged herself and her load up four flights of stairs of a dark tenement. The man who had followed her waited for a time and then knocked. There was a commotion inside and when the door was finally opened the visitor saw that an attempt had been made to conceal the boys' pants on which the woman and her five children were

Burdens too heavy for childish arms. Their mothers are at work in the sweatshops

On the way "home" with the task that will make old men and women of little children

working. But it was impossible to hide them; there was clothing everywhere. They feared it was an inspector from the State Labor Department. Really there was little cause to look for such an official, for when this was written there were only fifteen in the entire State and there are more than 13,000 licensed tenements — that is, houses in which the law gives the right to carry on home manufactures. The law calls for two inspections each year and the Labor Commissioner frankly admits that it is impossible to make more than one.

The mother, finally convinced that the visitor was not an inspector, told how she and her family, although they often worked far into the night, never knew how the rent was to be met nor where the next meal was coming from. Her worn and wasted face, the weary pallor of the children, told the story better than her words. The husband was a peddler and his earnings averaged about five dollars a week. They had been in the country little more than three years. None of the children could obtain working papers. They had not been in school

long enough. Every minute they were not in school or sleeping, and sleep in these days was curtailed, they were slaving. It was by the hardest kind of driving that among them they were able to finish twelve dozen pairs of boys' pants in twenty-four hours. Frequently the mother was forced to keep one or two children out of school to do this. The truant officer had been inquiring about Mike the week before.

"What will we do if they take Mike away?" asked one of the older little girls anxiously. "Mike is the quickest worker. If Mike was sent away we couldn't live in this house."

That meant they would be put into the street, for they couldn't well find a cheaper or more miserable apartment. Mike, the reliable, was at that minute felling a lining, his fingers moving with startling rapidity and more like a machine than anything that was human. He did not even glance up. There was a sullen look in the boy's face that made the visitor think he might perhaps one day develop into a very dangerous machine. And when the family had finished one dozen boys' pants how much do you

suppose they got for them? It seems almost unbelievable but is nevertheless true that the rate of pay was eight cents a dozen pairs. In other words, this mother labored from six or seven o'clock in the morning until ten or eleven o'clock at night, with the assistance of her five children when they were not in school, and they were able to make by this ceaseless effort ninety-six cents a day.

In the days of black slavery it was to the advantage of the owner to see that his human property was not overtaxed. If he had any regard for his own interests he gave his slave wholesome food and housing that was weather proof. The slave masters of the tenements today do not concern themselves over any such details. There is no need for them to bother about human conservation. They know that there is constantly pouring into the crowded districts of the metropolis a fresh stream of humanity, a gift from the steerage, to replace the lives that are being ground out, devitalized, wasted. The waste of human life is the greatest of all wastes in the country to-day. But in the case

of this family, as in the case of thousands of others, the fact that there was not enough money left after the payment of rent to afford them sufficient nourishment, that they were in reality fast being worked and starved to death, was not a matter of interest to the landlord or sweatshop owner. The one knew his rooms would not be vacant an hour, the other that there were thousands of other families in just as dire straits, who would grasp at any pittance he chose to offer. These are things that should concern the community, but as long as we permit the congestion, the exploitation of immigration and child labor they will continue.

In the Southern cotton mills illiterate ten-year-old children are found working long hours daily; in the glass factories of some northern States we find children working all night. Child labor in the cities is by no means confined to the so-called "licensed" tenements. "Licensed" means that in these houses the blinding of children, the stunting of them physically and mentally by long hours of ceaseless toil, is tacitly legalized. Certain industries may be

carried on here in the homes. The granting of this authority to conduct these industries in the homes while not setting forth, in so many words, permission to employ children under fourteen years, really opens the way; for how is it possible to prevent parents from using their four- or five-year-old children to pull out bastings, or to sort flowers, forced into it as they are by low wages and high rents? There was an increase of forty per cent. in the licensed tenements of New York State from 1907 to 1910. About ninety-five per cent. of the outstanding licenses have been granted to tenements in Greater New York. The existing law provides that a house must be licensed by the Labor Department if the tenants desire to make, alter or finish any of a specified list of forty-one articles. But there are more than sixty articles not mentioned in the law that are now made in the tenements. The condition surrounding the manufacture of this latter class of articles is so bad that frequently it is discovered that they are being made in homes where there is infectious disease.

Although for the manufacture of the goods

named in the license law the house must have a clean record on the book of the local Board of Health, violations frequently occur. In one home recently where there was scarlet fever the finishing of clothing was stopped. An inspector who called two weeks later, however, found the entire family, including two of the children who were peeling, engaged in sorting coffee. The sorting of coffee did not happen to be one of the restricted activities.

When the danger was pointed out to the mother she replied with a shrug of her shoulders:

"Coffee? You boil him. What the diff?"

But even with that optimistic view one could not but wonder through how many hands that infected coffee would pass before it reached the pot.

Some facts presented in a report just published by the United States Bureau of Labor after one of the most thorough child labor investigations ever made in any country do not make pleasant reading, but they demand the at-

tention of the community, for they show graphically how bad the conditions are.

"During this investigation," the report says, "it was learned that sympathetic doctors who will agree to conceal diseases from the Health Department are the most popular with garment workers. Agents of the Bureau found women working on garments while children in the house were suffering with contagious diseases. They would put the garments down from time to time to minister to or fondle such children.

"One home finisher visited had a little boy suffering from whooping cough. When he had a coughing spell the mother thrust her finger down into his throat in an effort to relieve him. This caused slight nausea and the mother wiped her fingers, covered with mucus, on the pants on which she was at work.

"In another case where a child's head and face were covered with a loathsome rash, the mother constantly stopped her work of finishing pants and caressingly ran her hand over this eruption, and then without washing them took

up the pants and continued her work. Asked what was the matter with her child she could only say that the doctor told her it was some 'ketcha disease.'

"In practically all the homes of these workers spitting on the floor was a conspicuous custom.

"Many manufacturers contend that no matter what the condition of the homes may be where garments are handled — no matter how filthy, diseased, or vermin laden, that the pressing with a hot iron destroys all germs and vermin, and that the presser always has a bottle of cleaning fluid to remove stains and dirt. But no one would knowingly buy clothing that had been vermin-infected or made in a home where one of the family had a contagious disease, even if assured and convinced that the garments were to be pressed with a hot iron before delivery and cleansed with a cleansing fluid. The presence of the garment in the shop before pressing is dangerous, not only to the presser, but to all other workers and to wearers of other garments that may then be in process of manufac-

ture in the shop. The shop employés are liable to transmit the diseases thus brought into the factory as they ride in street cars or mingle with crowds in streets, stores, or elsewhere.

"Not all home finishing is done under unsanitary or revolting conditions, yet the fact that it can be done under such conditions and that much of it is so done, forces the conclusion that such a method of manufacture should be abolished in the interest of public health. A single case of typhoid, traceable to polluted water or infected milk is sufficient to arouse a community, but the danger to the public through garments exposed to contagious or infectious diseases is even greater. People can be warned against the polluted water or infected milk once it is discovered, but there is no means of reaching those who are exposed to the infected garments."

The invasion of the home with this work means the lowering of the standards of living, neglect of household duties, insufficient sleep, irregularity of meals. The one dominant thought is to get the job finished as quickly as

possible and to secure more work from the factory. Two hundred Italian families were recently taken as the subjects of an intensive study of the willowing industry. One hundred of these families, all living under similar housing conditions, were engaged in feather work at home. The other group of one hundred families did no home-work. The school records of the home-working children showed an average absence of twenty-nine days out of an eighty-nine day school term, as against an average of ten days' absence in the same term for those not doing home-work. An investigation of the men's ready-made clothing trade showed that fifteen per cent. of the children in the families investigated were unlawfully out of school. A similar investigation of another group of families showed more than twenty-one per cent. of the children illegally absent from school. There are many children under school age too, who are kept almost constantly at work. It is not uncommon to find children three or four years of age pulling bastings or sorting petals for artificial flowers. Thousands of the children whose

school attendance is forced by the truant officers appear in their class rooms day after day physically exhausted by the labor forced upon them in their homes. If these lag with their lessons or are often unresponsive it is small wonder.

Much of the work performed by the children is done after the point of fatigue is reached. Obviously the driving of these children after that point, either at needle or lessons, must be harmful in its effects.

There is frequent adverse criticism of the public school system of our larger cities. And yet with all the burdens placed upon it through immigration, congestion and the weakening of the efficiency of pupils through child labor, it is truly to be marveled at that the teachers make the progress they do with their pupils. Under the present system we are expecting too much from pupils and teachers alike. As we have already seen, when the truant officer becomes too insistent on the child's attendance at school, and the parents realize that the child's contributions to the income are to be reduced through the

compulsory education law, they are willing parties to his commitment to a truant school or other public institution where he will be maintained at public expense until he has reached the age where he can legally work and help support the family.

In such legislation as exists regarding the regulation of home industries the chief thought seems to have been the safeguarding of the health of the immediate consumer. There has been little consideration of the more important need, the safeguarding of the ultimate health of the community. The result of prevalent child labor, the weakening of the municipality's vital resources through the soul and body destroying burdens placed on the army of child toilers is even a greater menace than the disease germs that may be communicated by goods that have been handled by sick workers. This is a matter that affects the future of the entire community. A law was enacted in New York in 1882 against the manufacture of cigars in tenements. Three years later this law was declared unconstitutional because the manufac-

ture of tobacco was not held to be a menace to public health. The decision in this case which has stood in the way of anything like adequate legislation said in part:

"It cannot be perceived how the cigar-maker is to be improved in his health or his morals by forcing him from his home with its hallowed associations and beneficent influences to ply his trade elsewhere."

But nothing was said about the baneful effects of home labor on childhood. The labor problem of the tenements was not in that day what it is now with the increased congestion. The decision is antiquated, but it still stands today a barrier to anything like adequate legislation. And yet there are some who still point to New York child labor laws as models.

It was shown by a recent national conservation commission that human beings, considered as capitalized working power, are worth from three to five times more than all our other capital, and that even at a very moderate estimate the total waste of our national vitality amounts to one and one-half billions of dollars a year.

The children who should serve as the nation's biggest asset for the future are being impoverished in mind and body by the slavery of their infancy. That their normal growth is being stopped, that their characters are being malformed, that many of them will become charges on the State if not a menace to it, is the result of a stupid shortsightedness as well as a vicious greed. Some day when we have learned more of the cost we shall stop the shameful sacrifice of a coming generation by the enactment and enforcement of laws that will emancipate the child slaves of to-day and permit them to develop into strong, useful citizens.

CHAPTER XI

THE NURSERY FOR LITTLE THIEVES

IN the matter of the people, on complaint of Police Officer Charles P. Lander against William Thompson, who with two others is charged with picking pockets and who pleads guilty.

The Court: "I want you to make the statement that you made to the officer."

The Defendant: "I give the statement that I was with them. There is another one in it. He follows me to school and all over and takes me out with him. Now I was in the house reading a book and he rings the bell and he comes up for me. He is a thief. He says to me, 'Come down,' and as soon as he sees me on the corner he takes me around to break into two flat houses."

The Court: "Did you follow him in?"

The Defendant: "He takes me in with him

and he tells me to see if the lady is in upstairs, and if she ain't he comes up with a big bunch of keys and makes me help carry all the stuff and he gives me a quarter and sends me to the theater."

The Court: "How long has this been going on?"

The Defendant: "Since two months ago. He rings the bell and he comes up and he sends me out."

The Court: "How old is he?"

The Defendant: "He is about twenty-four. The other two are twenty-six and twenty-three."

The Court: "Do they live together?"

The Defendant: "They got a furnished room over in 109th Street. I live in 110th. They get me away from home; last Tuesday they get me away, they get me away all the time. They come up to my house and they kid me and tell me how good I am and knock it in my head. This other one said he would kill me if I told on him. He is the one that goes by the name of 'Kid Chester.' He's got chloroform in his pocket. He told me he would take me over to

Brooklyn and chloroform the people over there and take their money off them. He said he got the chloroform from a doctor."

The Court: "The last time you were in this court you were put on parole; that was for picking pockets — had they sent you out then?"

The Defendant: "Yes, sir."

The Court: "So every time you have stolen or gone wrong they always took you out?"

The Defendant: "Yes, sir. I would be reading and they would ring the bell and I would come down and I could not control myself; they used to get me so that I would go down and go crazy over it and they would kid me along and I wouldn't know what to do. They took me up to their houses and showed me a lot of things — jimmies — and I slept there."

The Court (to the officer): "Can you find this man that he speaks of?"

The Officer: "They are of a roaming disposition. It may take time to do it; they go from one place to another."

The Defendant: "I know where to get him. As soon as he knows I am free he will look for

me. He goes into stores and carries a satchel; he meets me in school and tells me all about burglaries and how to open ladies' bags and brings me with him. He will come up to me again as soon as he knows I'm out."

These are the minutes of an actual case in the Children's Court except that William Thompson is a fictitious name and does not indicate the boy's nationality. The case is typical; the city lays William Thompson open to the advances of undesirable playmates, and with a boy's natural love of adventure is it strange if he follows down the byways into crime?

Great is the cost to the community. The aggregate value of money and property stolen each year by this kind of boy thief amounts to a large sum. Of all forms of juvenile delinquency that of the pickpocket is hardest to cure. Extraordinary forces have gone into his making and he is the one child whom it is most frequently beyond the power of even the Children's Court to help.

The pickpocket is not born but is made after months of most painstaking tutoring and test-

ing. Frequently he is the exemplary pupil to his school teacher who is in ignorance of another kind of training of mind and hand that he is receiving after school hours. A quick mind and nimble fingers are the first essentials for a successful pickpocket. Personality is important too, and if he is led into this business by trainers older than himself the lad who can make a plausible, tearful plea if caught is always to be preferred to one whose tongue and whose tear ducts work less readily when necessity arises.

The Children's Court and the Society have made what progress they could in driving out trainers like "Kid Chester" and cleverer men of his sort. But it is difficult to trap these fellows for they never take actual part in "larceny from the person" but are always across the street or at a near-by corner when it occurs. And the boys rarely divulge the names of the men who have initiated them into the ways of crime and thrived on their stealings. So deep has been the terror of their brutal trainers in which these lads have stood that I have seen

them go away to reformatories rather than betray their names. There are stories of boys who "squealed" having their ears clipped and of the sudden disappearance of others bold enough to talk to the authorities. Yet when boys work for Fagins they seldom get more than a crumb of the booty and some have told in court of large stealings in which their share has been but a few cents.

If not taught to steal by the older thieves, the children frequently get their first lesson in "dipping" from other companions of the dark hallways and the streets. And when once they have become skilled in picking pockets the money comes so easily that it is hard for them to give it up. The skill involved and also the danger give the game a zest beside which honest endeavor seems tame. The police recently caught a wealthy rug importer picking pockets. He had learned the art as a boy and even after he had established a big business that rated high on the commercial lists the old desire for excitement and a curiosity to know how much of his skill he retained got the better of him and led him back to

A typical street scene in one of the congested districts of New York. What chance is there for the children here?

stealing as a recreation. There are many other cases of this kind on the police records.

The ways in which boys are led into picking pockets are diverse and often so insidious that the youngsters have developed into clever thieves almost before realizing that they have done wrong. It not infrequently happens that a lad who is to be initiated into the thieves' fraternity suddenly finds that an older boy who wears better clothes than he and who has made other boys envious by a display of spending money, has taken a great interest in him. It is human nature to be proud of the attention of those who are apparently better off than ourselves. After a visit to a moving picture show that has been a revelation to the unconscious candidate, his new friend may take him to a candy shop where he meets other boys, who are also better dressed than himself, and who buy candy and cigarettes with amazing prodigality. He, perhaps, has not had five cents spending money in his whole gray, little life. His mother and the children at home may not get much more than five cents for finishing a dozen pieces of

sweat-shop work. Then his new friends explain a game to him that seems to give them rare amusement. One of them drops a twenty-five cent piece into his own pocket and tells the prospective recruit that he may have it if he can get it without being caught. And after he has seen others try and experienced the great fun at their detection he is finally persuaded to get into the game himself. The instructors are conveniently blind for one or two trials and the prospective thief has won and spent a half-dollar; wealth heretofore beyond his dreams. So step by step he is led along until with his newly acquired desire for easy money he is helping the other boys in the gang perhaps to play "stool to the dip," that is to crowd the unsuspecting pedestrian while the more expert "dip" goes into the chatelaine bag or pocket.

The push cart crowds have always offered a fertile field for the operations of this sort of thief. The peddlers themselves are frequently victims when the boys first set out to steal. This is particularly true of the children who are not working for Fagins but on their own ac-

count. They have neither the boldness nor the skill at the start that has been acquired by the instructed boys. Sometimes a half-dozen young thieves work together. Two elbow their way into the crowd while the others wait outside. When they have agreed on a victim one will jostle him and while his attention is thus distracted the other opens the handbag or goes through a promising pocket. Usually the theft is not discovered until the gang is far away. But should the luckless victim discover that he is being robbed, the accomplices on the edge of the crowd rush in and the booty is rapidly passed from one to the other. Sometimes the victim attempts to hold the thief and is set upon by the whole gang. If a policeman approaches someone sets up the cry: "Cheese it, the cop!" and the gang disappears to the four quarters of the wind in a jiffy.

An old-time and rather crude method was for two boys suddenly to set upon one another directly in front of a pedestrian whose wealth of watch chain or bulge of pocket had attracted them. Accomplices rushed into the pre-ar-

ranged fray, the pedestrian was upset and badly pummeled and after he had gained his feet and the last of the gang was flying around the corner he discovered that his watch or wallet was gone.

But usually the larceny is effected without any violence and the victim is unable to tell just how it happened. In company with a plain clothes man whose specialty was boy pickpockets I have watched members of these gangs go into one pocket and bag after another and take an inventory of the contents before finally attempting a "lift." This investigating of bags and pockets is called in pickpocket parlance, "sounding." There are boys who under cover of a proffered newspaper lift watches, others who go through pockets in the darkness of moving picture shows, others who prey on the crowds in street cars and the more important business streets and still others who lie in wait for unsuspecting immigrants at the Barge Office.

One young thief known as "Benuck" brought much woe to the East Side through his successful robberies of women by a novel method

of his own. With a keen-edged razor in his possession, Benuck would worm his way through a crowd and unobserved slip under a push cart. Here he would wait until there came within reach a woman that he thought might carry her money in her stocking. It is said that he chose the women with thick, unsensitive ankles in searching for such depositories, thereby reducing the chance of getting caught. Once the hiding place of the money was discovered he brought his razor into play with the delicacy of a surgeon, cut the stocking and while the owner haggled with the peddler, extracted her bank notes and slid away to other fields. This fellow long baffled the police, for his whole method was difficult to detect.

Before me at the moment is a letter from one of the most skillful boy pickpockets in the country whose stealings in his thirteenth year, he told me, sometimes amounted to more than $1,000 a month. His real name will not be given here because of the very remote possibility that some day he may leave crooked ways. Reformatory institutions will never do it and the

letter from which I shall quote was written after able men had labored hard and patiently to break him from stealing. He had been committed twice and was living in a good home about an hour's ride from the city, in the employ of a man who had been very kind to him, when he wrote this letter:

"I am still doing well and hope to keep it up all the time. I am trying very hard to stop the bad habits I had in New York and I am going to see if I don't have better luck. I am going to employ my mind better than I ever did and my hands as well. I think my hands are the hardest."

When the time had come for Jacob's release — let us call him Jacob for convenience — the Superintendent of the second institution to which he had been sent found work for him on a Connecticut farm. He wanted to keep the boy far away from his old companions of the East Side. But here Jacob became so despondent that the farmer for whom he worked asked the Superintendent to take him back to the Refuge. Jacob was glad to return. It had

been terribly lonesome in the country, he said, "the quiet made his ears hurt."

"But I kept straight," he went on. "There was a picnic one Sunday in a grove near the house where I lived and they let me go. I guess my boss wouldn't have let me if he'd known how hard it was for me to keep my hands out of other people's pockets. Those farmers and their wives were the easiest crowd I ever saw. Not much money, maybe, but it would have been great fun. I had to shove my hands into my own pockets and hold 'em so tight my fingers ached."

So a place had been found for Jacob that was a compromise between the lonesomeness of an isolated farm and the crowds of the city and the boy had been sent to the Long Island suburb. Here his nimble fingers and alert mind were kept constantly employed in a succession of wholesome occupations. But the longing for the city was keen in him and in the same letter in which he told me of his good progress he said he was trying to persuade the Superintendent of the Institution that had released him on a parole to

let him visit New York for just one day. Jacob's father died about this time and he was allowed to come to the East Side for the funeral. An institution officer whose identity was known only to Jacob and his employer accompanied him. They had scarcely set foot on Manhattan Island before the news spread that the "thousand-dollar-grafter," as the boy was known to his old associates, was in the city for a day. Some of the old crowd contrived to get a message to him. Jacob went back to Long Island, but ran away within a fortnight. So far as was known he had stolen absolutely nothing while at his new home. But the old lure was too strong for him. After several months' search, an officer of the Refuge caught sight of him through a car window on the subway plying his old trade in a crowd at the Fourteenth Street station. He captured Jacob after a hard fight and he was taken back to Randall's Island. Some weeks later while at work with other inmates of the institution on a pier he jumped into the river and was picked up by a boat that evidently was waiting for him. But he was over-

taken after an exciting chase and is still in the Refuge.

This boy's training in thievery was so thorough, his proficiency so great, that it is doubtful if the pickpocket virus in him ever will be killed. The skill, the very risk involved, the easy money, made "larceny from the person" like the breath in his nostrils. His history will serve, perhaps, to show the need of rooting out the resorts where the young pickpockets get their start and of dealing drastically with all the influences to which so naturally they fell a prey. For in Jacob's experience we have the meeting of more than one of those hard conditions with which we have had to do, chapter by chapter, in the story of the Children's Court.

His father came here from Russia to escape persecution. He was a pious man with strict ideas for his children, but quite unable to cope with all the new, bewildering conditions of the "free country." He had rented a push cart with which there went the privilege of naturalization papers along with the peddler's license, and upon whose precarious business he and his family must

subsist. They lived, the four of them, in one room — which meant that if Jacob and his sister were not always to be under their elders' feet they must take the streets for their playground. Across Seward Park, locally known as Tageblatt Square, Jacob went to school and here — it was their headquarters at the time — the Fagins met him. He was bright and quick — notably so in school — a large-eyed, good-looking boy whose patent qualities marked him out for their purposes. They were very kind to him, these affluent, over-dressed young men; they gave him money and showed him tricks and asked him if he couldn't, uncaught, slip a parcel out of the old lady's bag in front of them — just as a joke, she was an aunt of theirs. They praised his quickness, his deft, light hand; they became the secret zest and the reward in his cramped and colorless life, and when finally the rewards of the game had multiplied beyond even the child's powers of credence, what had Jacob at the age of eight to oppose to their lures? Jacob's stern old father had all that he could righteously do to earn their meager daily bread and shelter and nobody else

saw to it that Jacob had anything to interest him.

The basement poolroom, as we have seen, no longer has a monopoly of this class of business as the nursery of little thieves, though there are many of them still serving as primary academies of crime. With the loosening of the grip of the Fagins through the efforts of the Court and with the boys taking the business over into their own control the favorite meeting places now are the cheap candy shops, the coffee saloons and the moving picture shows, all of which have been springing up with mushroom rapidity in the past few years. The price commonly charged in the pool rooms was two and one-half cents a cue; now, with all the rival attractions, it has dropped to one cent. The cheap candy shops have spread so rapidly that in some of the congested districts they now outnumber the saloons. There is no intention to make it appear that all cheap candy shops are meeting places for young thieves, but conducted as they are, on the face of it mainly for the patronage of children, there is usually little scruple as to how that patronage is obtained. And the atmosphere often is not much better than

that of the basement poolrooms. Flanked about with cheap post cards often dealing with unwholesome subjects, "nickel libraries," and poor, adulterated candy, the young thieves can easily gather here to puff cigarettes and plan their next adventure.

This class of cigarette traffic, by the way, would make an interesting subject for government investigation. The price frequently charged to children is one cent for two. Were they made of pure materials the effects perhaps would not be so vicious. But their manufacturers have hit on a system of adulteration and treatment that binds thousands of their boy patrons to them in almost hopeless slavery. This is not the ranting of an anti-cigarette crank — any prejudice that the writer might hold, would naturally tend in the other direction. But when an officer of a big tobacco combination bewails the fact that children are being injured mentally and physically through the sale of these adulterated "coffin-nail" cigarettes, it is time to think. This same official would have the manufacture of such stuff prohibited by law. He states — and for obvious

reasons I cannot give his name here — that in some popular brands there is not ten per cent. of pure tobacco. To use his own words: "The other ninety per cent. is often treated alfalfa and dope." Another of the permitted sins of greed.

But to return to our pickpockets. The police and the Society officers in raids on thieves' hang-outs used once to find lay figures with chatelaine bags or with capacious pockets on which the prospective artists in this business had practiced. A bell-hung coat was one of the properties found in a Ridge Street resort. It took a lot of practice for a boy with even the quickest and lightest touch to get anything out of a pocket that had been delicately wired to alarm bells.

A lad in the Children's Court told of similar paraphernalia in use in a First Avenue bird store that was really the cover for a thieves' headquarters. Behind this lad as he faced the Court stood his brother, about thirty years old, who, the Society report showed, had been in the House of Refuge years before for picking pockets. Suspicion that he had been training the boy immediately fell upon him, but the crushed and

heart-sick appearance of the young man as he stepped forward startled even the Court, used as he was to such things.

"I've tried so hard to keep this kid straight," he said. "I've tried to watch him every minute I was not away at work, for I know what once bein' a 'dip' means. I've kept straight for the past few years — as straight as I could. I've been doing the closest thing I could get to honest work — runnin' a gambling house. But I wanted this boy to amount to something. He's never known my business, he's never known I've been sent up. But the crooks must have got him when I wasn't at home. When was it?" he demanded fiercely.

But the boy hung his head and was silent.

"I used to give him a little spendin' money now and then," the man went on, "so there wouldn't be no need for him to go and steal it. I guess he was gettin' a good deal more on the outside. He used to come home once in a while with a black eye and a lot of bruises. When I asked him he always said he had a fight with a bigger boy and got the worst of it. It was the

crooks beat him to make him steal or give up the money he'd lifted."

He clenched his fist again. "I know I'll never amount to nothin', but I did look for things from that boy. And now, Judge, he's gone. This settles it; he'll never amount to nothin' neither!"

He stood in utter dejection, a big, lolling, broken figure. But suddenly he roused, he hammered the rail with his sledge of a fist. "Oh, I wish I could get at 'em!" he sobbed. "I wish I could get 'em!"

One of the most prominent men in the Bar Association while visiting the Children's Court said to a pickpocket specialist from Central Office: "I don't see how it is possible for a man of alertness and intelligence to be robbed of his watch or jewelry in broad daylight without the thief being detected."

"That is hard to understand," replied the detective.

A few minutes later the lawyer was amazed to see his diamond scarf pin adorning the lapel of the detective's coat.

"When did you do it?" he demanded, stunned.

"Immediately after you spoke. I have been watching the boy pickpockets so long that I know a little about their business. And yet," the detective added, "they would regard me as an awkward novice."

"Say, Mister," spoke up an under-sized, thirteen-year-old culprit that this detective had just brought in, "dat flatty" (the plain clothes man) "was dead slow. If I wuz as tall as he wuz I'd a had it and been lookin' over the crowds in Grand Street by now."

This boy knew that he was to be sent away and he was quite willing to boast of his triumphs. All he wanted was a listener.

"Say, I've lifted ticks (watches) right in front of de flatties' eyes. De're too slow for me. And say, me and me fren's been all over de country," and he raised his husky little voice and straightened his narrow shoulders. "It wuz great travelin'. We stopped off at Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago. Then we hit Los Angeles and lived good for two months. But say, Fourteenth Street's good enough for me."

But soon Moses, taking on the look of an old man, began to moralize. "There ain't nuttin' in dis crookin' business. I'm goin' to straighten out now and when I come out get into some good business. You just watch me."

Moses needed watching. He ran away twice in one year from the reformatory to which he had been sent. The last time a new officer from the institution, one they thought Moses would not recognize, went to the old haunts of the boy and after watching for several hours grabbed a youngster who looked much like Moses and who certainly wore the khaki suit in which he had run away. The officer was sure of his quarry for he had heard another boy call to him: "Come here, Moses." Vigorous explanations were in progress when the officer beheld the real Moses across the street with his fingers wiggling violently at his nose. He didn't catch the right Moses, who keenly enjoyed this ruse which was all of his own devising, for several weeks.

Moses is different from the other boy pickpockets, in having a keen sense of humor. Some criminologists will tell you that no delinquent

or criminal who is beyond hope of reform has any humor. Moses has, but it is very doubtful if even he will ever straighten out. He is now in another reformatory.

Boys of this sort undoubtedly work great harm in many of the institutions to which they are committed. They are bound to boast of their criminal proficiency and to teach other boys to steal. A most valuable feature of the cottage system that is gradually being adopted by the reformatory institutions is the separation of boys such as this from others who could not but suffer from contact with them. It would seem that the isolation of such boys should begin even earlier, in the detention rooms where they are held pending a disposition of their cases in the Children's Court. If much progress is to be made in rooting out this evil among children the rules of isolation and treatment will have to be as rigid as those observed in handling smallpox.

The insidious thing about the pickpocket germ is that it seizes upon the child's imagination, his natural impulse for adventure. And this brings

us to the point where so many of the offenses that appear before the Children's Court have brought us, to the thought of preventive measures rather than those that are curative. The child learns through his amusements; they are as much a part of healthy growth as sunshine and they are all great educational factors. Society ought therefore to provide them as a part of its educational system. If we do not there is always someone who will take advantage of the neglected opportunity, someone who will give cheap "shows" and games, who will teach a boy cleverly to take things from the pockets of his "aunt."

"He gives me a quarter and sends me to the theater," says William Thompson of the thief who taught him — why can't the community take a hint from "Kid Chester" and send the boy to the theater itself? We have begun well in playgrounds, in dancing at the public schools — we ought to go much farther. There should be many more recreation places of the sort already started. And why should we not add moving pictures to our opportunities for molding the

citizens to come, a good, clean, straight, moving picture place under proper municipal supervision and not controlled by a private combination whose sole thought is profit, where the boy could be taught history and travel without knowing it, where he could get the sense of adventure and where there was nothing to betray his ready imagination into crime before he knew the meaning of it?

CHAPTER XII

THE MENTAL MISFITS

THERE is another glaring sin of the community against our neighbor's child which demands attention. This is its failure to recognize and to provide proper treatment for children who are mentally irresponsible and who are yet neither imbecile nor insane. Many of these mentally defective and exceptional children naturally come into the Children's Courts.

A lad with keel-shaped head, wandering eyes set close together and a scant upper lip is arraigned for stealing.

"He's been here five times and has been committed twice," despairingly declares the representative of the Society.

The Court studies the forlorn and anæmic figure before him. Nature and the world have combined against the boy. His equipment at the start has been deficient and because of a conven-

tional order of things with which he has constantly been in conflict he has never had anything like a chance for proper adjustment. The Superintendent of the refuge where the boy spent more than eighteen months on his last commitment declares that he does not want him returned there. The refuge can do nothing with him, he is a total misfit.

"What am I to do?" asks the Judge. To send him back is to make him forever a criminal, to release him is to work an injustice to society.

Here is a small cog that will not fit in the machinery of any existing institution. If the cog is driven in, it is irreparably damaged, and the machinery is thrown out of gear.

But the matter ends in this case as it does in the cases of other defective delinquents — because there is no other place to send him the boy is led back rebellious and bitter to the very reformatory that struggled vainly over him. He will be put to the same tasks and into the same classes with normal boys. Whether set to manual work or study, tasks set him may be commenced, but can never be performed. There is an excellent

school system in the institution but it has been discovered that after his year and a half there this boy cannot spell the words "cat" or "the." To enable him to make any progress in the most rudimentary branches individual attention and the endless patience of specially trained teachers would be required. Even in one of the more modern reformatory institutions for ordinary delinquents conducted on the cottage plan there could be no adequate care or treatment. What is needed here is medical and mental treatment by experts in a special institution.

The mental deficiencies of such children lead them irresistibly to commit acts against the law. They are the victims of environmental or congenital causes which predispose them to crime. In its present method of treating children of this type — or rather in its neglect of them — the State is sowing a continuous crop for its prisons and almshouses.

One of the chief causes of mental defectiveness is the feeble mindedness of parents. In this case the law of heredity cannot be gainsaid. There is no possible doubt that mental defectiveness is

transmitted from father to son, from grandparents to grandchildren, and it has been estimated that this type of family increases at twice the rate of the general population. Without the careful examination of a psychiatrist they pass before the Court as normal children. Perhaps they violate their parole or come back a second and third time. Then they are sent to the ordinary reformatory institution. It may be that the absence of thyroid glands in these children has brought about cretinism, there may be a brain lesion due to hereditary syphilis, the trouble may have been due to epilepsy, or in simpler cases the presence of adenoids may retard normal development and render the child irritable and mentally lazy. Again prolonged mal-nutrition may have been the seat of the trouble. But plainly for none of these conditions is a reformatory the proper place.

So lax is the present system of examination for mental and physical defectiveness in our public schools that the authorities themselves admit they have no proper basis for conclusions. When one physician, aside from looking after

The babies demand her attention, so she cannot go to school

Their automobile is a trifle crowded, but they have to make the most of their opportunities

his regular practice, is supposed to examine mentally and physically five thousand children in a district, a situation that is within the writer's knowledge, we at once see that there is little of the sifting process possible. There are some ungraded classes but it is only the flagrant cases that get into them.

According to the report of a recent investigation of 42,750 children in Boston schools less than fifty per cent. were physically normal. It is only in the past few years that any study has been given to these problems, but it would seem that from ten to thirty per cent. of the adult criminals are mentally defective and that their mental defects are responsible for their criminality. The superintendent of the Bedford Reformatory recently reported that one-third of the inmates of that institution were subnormal; and from the Elmira Reformatory it was stated at the same time, that 335 of the inmates were mentally defective while seventy per cent. were physically defective.

Had we taken these defectives as children and treated them as their conditions required, there

would be to-day a notable decrease in the population of our almshouses and prisons. Now we do not pretend to say here that anything like from ten to thirty per cent. of the children who get into the juvenile courts are mentally defective. There are some fadists and sentimentalists who would pounce on every other child and search his person for the stigmata of degeneration. If the boy stole a pie, then on some portion of his head, they, by the grace of their imaginations, a pair of calipers and perhaps a spirit level, will find a pie bump. Did he hit another boy in a stone fight? Then somewhere in his brain convolutions they will find a kink productive of cruelty. They would promptly jimmy into the head of every boy who came before the court, tamp out the supposed twists in his brain lobes, tack up the crevices and turn him back to his parents, a paragon of virtue. But after a near view of about 100,000 children who have been charged with violation of the law, I assert positively that the vast majority of them are absolutely normal from the standpoint of their surroundings. As we have seen, the en-

vironment which we permit for our neighbor's child is intolerably bad. This is leading to the great, growing crop of physically subnormal children. It certainly must have some effect mentally too. For poverty leads to alcoholism and the spread of crime and disease.

More drunkenness is caused by poverty, than poverty by drunkenness. It is the cruel grip of poverty too, the awful monotony and drudgery at pittances that enable a girl worker but half to subsist that is the chief augmenting force for the army of prostitution. If we consider the wretched wages too often paid to girls behind counters, to seamstresses, to shopworkers, it is readily apparent that many of them cannot be expected to support themselves by this means alone. What hypocrisy it is when the employers of such labor announce from time to time gifts to various philanthropies! The real service would be to give living wages and thus spare the girls from bondage. But such "charity" is not so cheap and does not command the same amount of publicity. The relation of all this to defectiveness may seem remote, but it is just

such conditions that go far toward increasing the number of the feeble minded. For poverty and prostitution lead to the spread of disease and certain of these diseases, whether alcoholism or syphilis, are important factors in enfeebling the minds of coming generations.

It has been estimated that those who are called the "high grade," feeble-minded people make up perhaps thirty per cent. of our criminals, a large percentage of our paupers and a still larger percentage of our women of ill fame. A recent investigation at the training school at Vineland, New Jersey, an institution for mentally defective children, those who need special care and training, showed that one feeble-minded man was the father of five feeble-minded children and the grandfather of at least nine feeble-minded grandchildren, only one of whom was being cared for in an institution where she could never become a mother. Faced with such statistics, we realize that the problem of crime, poverty and defectiveness can never be solved until it is attacked at the source. This institution at Vineland, by the way, which is

caring for about 400 defectives, is supported by private charity. The zeal of one man for whom the problem of the feeble-minded had a personal interest, led to its establishment. It is now owned and controlled by an association of about 200 members. The property, which is worth a quarter of a million, has all been contributed as a free-will offering by a few persons who saw and appreciated the need of such an institution. There is not another exactly like it in the country, but one day when the community has awakened to the importance of this problem there will be at least one such institution in each State and these supported by public instead of private funds.

It sometimes happens that the defectives who come into the Children's Court know that their afflictions render them irresponsible. For instance, a boy whose fiendish outbreaks of temper made it impossible for his parents to manage him was committed recently to a protectory. On having a task assigned him there he balked and fought with his teachers, declaring: "I did not come here to work, but to get my nose cured.

I'd be all right if they'd only cure my nose." It was then discovered that he had growths in his nose and throat that created nervousness and a mental condition that incapacitated him from work or study.

Within three months after his last release a boy who had twice been in a protectory was again twice arrested for stealing. His last offense had been the larceny of twenty dollars from his mother. Then he rallied a band of younger boys about him, bought pistols, and with the help of his companions, dug a cave far from his home in the Bronx. Here he and his band had their abode for several days until a policeman lassoed the disappearing leg of the chief as he dived back into his hole after venturing forth to reconnoiter. It developed at the hearing in the Children's Court that the boy leader had in him a strange strain of cruelty. He had taken particular delight in chopping off a dog's tail. Several times he had hacked off the legs of live chickens. His appearance indicated mental deficiency and the Court sent him to a psychiatrist for examination. The report

showed that the boy was a moral imbecile, but there was no proper institution to which he could be sent.

To illustrate further the hopelessness of sending defectives into the ordinary institution I shall cite here the case of a fifteen-year-old lad arraigned in the Children's Court six times. He had twice been committed to reformatories, once for larceny and again for robbery — or rather that is what his offenses would have amounted to had he not been under the age of sixteen and had he been taken to a court for adults. The lad's sixth arraignment was for stabbing another boy. Following his last release from an institution he had apparently been making fine progress under the supervision of his uncle, a lawyer, who took him into his office. The boy seemed to possess a very good mind and went frequently into Court for the lawyer uncle to answer the call of the calendar; but children who lived near the boy knew he had been in the House of Refuge and, in the thoughtless cruelty of childhood, sometimes taunted him. He was on his way home one evening

when a boy rode up on a bicycle and called teasingly:

"When did you beat the Ref?"

The boy flew into an old-time rage and kicked the bicycle, upsetting the rider. His tormentor scrambled to his feet and struck him; the latter then drew a knife and repeatedly stabbed the other.

When brought to the Children's Court the boy tried to dash his brains out against a wall.

"I don't want to go back to the Island," he cried, and it required three attendants to hold him.

It developed shortly after this boy had been committed the first time that he was a defective. Without provocation he suddenly attacked another boy in the institution and almost chewed off one of his ears. He subsequently attempted to kill an officer while he was in the "meditation division" where he was to stand in isolated confinement as a punishment for his first outbreak. The superintendent than sent the boy to the psychopathic ward at Bellevue Hospital for observation. The resident alienist

after a careful study of the case wrote the following report:

> We are of the opinion that this is not a proper case for care in one of our institutions (State insane asylums) within the meaning of the statute. However, the boy shows evidences of constitutional mental defects due to lack of development. From your history as well as our examination of the boy it appears that he suffers from attacks probably of the nature of epilepsy. In these attacks these patients are not responsible; do not know what they are doing. Although there is no doubt of his lack of mental stability and of his defective development, he is not a proper case for the care and custody of a State insane asylum within the meaning of the statute.

With all these facts before it there was nothing for the Court to do but to send the boy back for the third time to the reformatory that could only make him a confirmed criminal and whose discipline would be disturbed by his presence.

The abnormally bright delinquents, those with astute minds but without equilibrium, offer a more interesting study. The record of a genius, even though he be a criminal, is naturally more interesting than that of a low order of defectives. The diverting of this genius from crimi-

nal into useful ways might be, even in a single case, of inestimable value to the State.

A frank-faced youngster of fourteen, with the air of a young Chesterfield, was arraigned in the Children's Court a few years ago, charged with having defrauded a department store of a considerable sum of money by a series of clever forgeries. His attractive face, polite speech and quiet manner, his whole appearance, his immaculate turn-down collar set off by his neat knickerbockers and patent ties, marked him out in contrast to the motley throng of boys waiting to go before the judge. It seemed incongruous that such a lad could be charged with swindling. Even the detective who took him into custody was half inclined to ask that the complaint be dismissed — he feared he had made a mistake. But to the fatherly, keen-minded judge, who had a long talk with the boy, he finally confessed forging the checks on which the complaint was based. This boy, who was from the West, had, when he was eleven years of age, edited a newspaper of which he was the founder. His father was a poor printer. With no collateral other

than his unmitigated nerve he had traveled through the country stopping at the best hotels. He was living at the Waldorf-Astoria when arrested. He had an interesting interview with Russell Sage, and I am told that he even induced the late financier to invest in one of his Western schemes. This perhaps speaks more for the boy's persuasive power, than anything I could say.

Following the announcement of the boy's arraignment in the Children's Court there came a stream of letters from men and women who had met him in parlor cars, in hotel lobbies, in restaurants, East and West. One level-headed priest wrote that he had spent the greater part of a day in conversation with the lad on a railway train. He declared that, although he was quiet in demeanor, the boy was chronically in a state of mental exaltation.

When this young marvel was committed to a reformatory, the officers of the institution were urged for the boy's own good to keep him in the background and away from visitors. About three months later when I was one of hundreds of

guests at a Washington Birthday celebration at this same institution, what was my amazement to see, in powdered queue and cocked hat, the center of all attention, this very lad as George Washington himself! The Court's commitment had been indeterminate, and in an ordinary case the shortest time for release would have been a year and a half; he, however, in a few months more, talked himself out of the institution and into a Washington bank. His shrewd mind quickly grasped enough details of that business to enable him soon to disappear with a considerable sum of the bank's money. He was arrested later in a Western State and sent to a reformatory. He declared later that he would never again commit a criminal act. On his release he obtained employment as a traveling salesman.

Between midnight and dawn one morning, in a Kansas City hotel, he turned on both jets of gas in his room, and was dead when discovered. Beside the body of the boy, who was then only eighteen years old, was found this note:

"Worry, unhappiness, undeserved condemna-

tion, and hatred of doing wrong are the cause."

And so because of our lack of wisdom in these matters, the lack of knowledge and of means for expert treatment at the right time, all the splendid possibilities latent in the boy were lost to the community.

Another lad whom the writer watched for months was declared by a lunacy commission to be irresponsible and sent to the prison for the criminal insane at Matteawan. He was apparently a splendid specimen of budding physical manhood, and through his politeness of manner and agreeable personality was quick to make friendly acquaintances. But from those for whom he professed the greatest friendship he did not hesitate to steal. His parents, unable to keep him at home, had sent him from one private school and military academy to the other. He was dismissed from all. Brokenhearted over his various misdeeds, his parents finally had him committed to a semi-private institution. Twice he made his escape. He had quite as agreeable a personality as did the criminal genius who committed suicide in the Kansas

City Hotel. After his last larceny a commission appointed to inquire into his mental condition found that he had degenerated into a moral imbecile. One of our greatest alienists has declared that, taken in time, this boy could have been saved. It is a striking example of mental defectiveness.

There have been exceptional children, a number of them girls, who, because of fancied grievances, have attempted suicide. One sensitive boy whose mental deficiencies and stuttering were related lately attempted suicide because his teacher in a moment of petty temper, mimicked him — an act that should have barred her forever from the schools but she is still teaching. Some boys of the exceptional class show morbid craving for sympathy and marvelous genius for evolving out of thin air stories of mothers murdered by fathers, of escapes from atrocious cruelty at home, of strange travels and adventures. One of these lads who had never been off Manhattan Island told of the slaughter of his parents in South Africa, of wandering from city to city, and he told it with such cun-

ningly devised detail and plausibility that he kept the Court wondering for a week.

There is indeed need of a general awakening to the fact that a number of mentally defective and exceptional children are arraigned in the Children's Courts each year, and although they are not responsible for their acts they are being thrust, as we have seen, into ordinary reformatory institutions. Here there is nothing for them but acute suffering and in the end no result but habitual criminality or pauperism. One exceptional child with criminal tendencies — and it is to be remembered that he may be a genius or near idiot — is often a potentiality for tremendous evil. When the feeble-minded produce children, they are always certain to become dependent, delinquent, or diseased, and these in their turn produce offspring of a similar character. To illustrate: at Vineland there is a feeble-minded boy who has as parents a normal father and a feeble-minded mother. As a result of this marriage there are seven feeble-minded children living and five others who died in infancy. And in following the family back as far

as the grandparents the boy was the fourth child of the strain in the institution. The studies of Vineland have shown that sixty-five per cent. of the feeble-minded are children of feeble-minded parents. A recent investigation showed that eight women in an almshouse had given birth to feeble-minded children within six weeks of one another. The superintendent of the same place said that of 105 children born there within a period of five years 102 were feeble-minded.

The feeble-minded too cannot become self-supporting when subjected to present day competition. They are thus a drain upon private or public charity or upon family strength and resources. It costs the State $161.20 to support a feeble-minded person in an institution, but the cost of maintaining one at large is incalculably greater.

But the plea that is made here is for those mental defectives who are neither imbecile nor insane but who have an irresistible predisposition to crime. There are children whose mental deficiencies lead them irresistibly to steal, to commit assaults, to torture or burn, but who are

not morally responsible when they commit these acts. The feeble-minded are a growing danger and burden to society, and in its gradual abandonment of antiquated method of treating child offenders the State must recognize that the mentally defective and exceptional child requires a social process of training. The State, in fact, can ill afford to hesitate longer in providing proper institutions for the segregation and special treatment of its mental defectives, both in justice to the defectives themselves and from the standpoint of the community, thus meeting a growing danger and burden to society. And above all, the State must see to it that the feeble-minded are not permitted to become parents.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIG BROTHERS AND THE BIG SISTERS

WE are hearing more to-day about the brotherhood of man than ever before. That question about my brother's keeper was asked some thousands of years ago. We are just beginning to learn something of its significance. Did we fully realize that our neighbor is our brother and the responsibility is ours, we would not permit many of the things which we have seen happen to him. Our societies for protection of child life, our Children's Courts, our child labor committees, are all tardy, surface croppings, which indicate a great underlying belief in the brotherhood of man, would we but go to it.

Another small but significant indication that we are at last setting some store by the idea of human brotherhood, is the way in which the Big Brother and Big Sister Movements are appeal-

ing to ever widening circles of men and women of good-will. There had been no intention at the outset to include anything here about the Big Brothers and the Big Sisters, as that was regarded as all too incidental. The plan had been to deal with that work in a subsequent book on different lines. But so rapidly is the Big Brother Movement spreading, and so firmly does its appeal clinch human sympathy, that it seems the writer cannot avoid at least making some reference to it.

Let it be said at the outset, that there is no reason why the work of the Big Brothers and the Big Sisters should be confined to any one religion or creed, any more than it should be confined to merely those boys and girls who have come into conflict with the law. It is open to men and women of good will in all creeds and occupations, to boys and girls of all stations. Its simplicity, its humanity, are the elements which make its appeal universal.

The spark of human sympathy that kindled in the hearts of the forty pioneer Big Brothers as they sat that night eight years ago in the

drawing room of the Rev. Dr. Wilton Merle-Smith, in New York, and heard the call of their little brothers, who were being submerged in the hopeless environment which the community tolerated, has grown into a flame that has touched the hearts of men and women to-day in more than forty cities of this country. The work seems to have sprung up almost spontaneously. This will immediately be apparent when it is known that up to the time these lines are written there has been no national secretary, no national organization; but merely the spread of the watch-word, Big Brother, Big Sister, has set many men and women in various localities into action for the rescue of their less fortunate little neighbors.

The idea came into being at a gathering of a men's church club. While this club had been formed for the purpose of studying civic betterment, it also had a desire to serve. It is astonishing how many thousands, yes, and scores of thousands there are of such organizations that really should be great factors for social service, that are content with merely studying and

One of these boys is "Dutch de Barrel Crook." The transformation of both began when they were sent to the country.

discussing things. Perhaps the fault has been in the past that there has not been enough concentration. It was Theodore Parker who said that the church should lead the civilization of the age:

"It should lead the way in all moral enterprises in every work that aims directly at the welfare of men. Its sacraments should be great works of reform. The one great end should be the building of a State where there is honorable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for all minds, and love and faith in every heart."

Now the men of this particular club were not content with theory and talk. They had the energy and the desire to do practical good. All were professional or business men of experience. The thought was brought home to them that the tenement child was their neighbor and something of the responsibility was theirs. Someone asked: "Is there anything we can do?"

"Yes," was the answer. "If each man here will take an interest in just one boy, who has been the victim of bad environment, show him

there is someone who cares, and will be a sort of big brother to him, that will be real service."

These men saw it. They realized then that all of us are largely creatures of environment and that there were thousands of future citizens who could be rescued, if someone would but extend a helping hand.

A boy once defined a friend as: "A feller wot knows all about yer and likes yer jest the same."

That was the kind of friendship that was to grow up between these men and boys and the thousands of others who later joined the brotherhood. The men found before they had gone very far that they had quite as many deficiencies as the youngsters. These men had always slept in good, comfortable beds at night; they had enjoyed three square meals every day of their lives except when they were suffering from indigestion; most of them had read about poverty in books but few had seen it face to face. The name of a boy who could profit by a man's wholesome friendship was sent to each of the original Big Brothers. Their missions took them into unattractive streets where the chil-

dren played in the gutters, into dark hallways, into ramshackle houses. When they climbed the black, creaky stairs, a drunken voice sometimes answered their knock with a gruff: "What yer want?"

It was all a brand new experience to them and more than one man confided to me afterwards that he went up those tenement stairs with some misgivings. One was greeted at a top landing by a disheveled, militant female who when he asked for Johnnie produced a rusty horse pistol. A belligerent lady thought it was one of the "hookey" officers until the visitor made plain the pacific character of his mission. Another was threatened with a deluge of soapsuds when he inquired for Dick, the mother having mistaken him for one of the dreaded "Gerries," as the officers of the Society are frequently called by those parents whose delinquencies run to drink and cruelty. But when Mrs. O'Farrell came to understand that the Big Brother had called to invite Dick to join a gymnasium, her wrath thawed to the point where she invited him to have a "sup" of beer

out of the same can, a courtesy that was duly appreciated.

One of the first visits was that of Mr. James T. Britan, the assistant pastor of Dr. Merle-Smith's church. When he went into a dark cellar in the Hell's Kitchen district, he found the boy who only a few days before had been in the Children's Court, trembling with fright beside his mother who was thought to be dying in the clutches of the "white death." The boy had been arrested for playing truant, and had been released on probation on the promise that he would go to school every day. When he saw the minister's legs coming down those steps, he thought it was the truant officer and he feared he would be dragged away to the truant school. The father was dead. The older brother was out seeking work. They were out of food, fuel, medicine, everything they needed. While the boy had been there nursing the dying mother, he technically had been a violation of the law.

The men had been warned against useless money charity, about the parasites that would probably prey on them were it discovered that

they did not know when and where to give. But here was a case that demanded money relief at once. As a result of that visit, the tubercular mother and her small family were moved into three bright, clean rooms. Work was obtained for the older brother. The smaller boy was placed back in school. The mother is alive to-day and the "little brother" of that day has developed into a splendid, manly fellow, with considerable artistic ability, and occupies an important place in the designing department of one of the big stores.

The assignment of another Big Brother took him over into an East Seventy-fifth Street tenement late one night. It was long past the time when all of the children should have been in bed, but five of the ten he found standing about the outside of the little store the family rented on the ground floor. When the children were asked why they were not asleep, they replied that they "had to make room" for the others. It was "their turn in bed" now. In fact, there was not sufficient room in the two little cubby holes this family used as a home and place of

business for the entire brood to occupy it at one time. This family was helped to get into larger, brighter, airier quarters, too, with good results.

Then there was a youngster who had made a tearful plea in court for the release of his little sister who had stolen potatoes from a peddler's wagon for his breakfast so that he could go to work. The mother had died several years before. The father had succumbed only recently to consumption, but in his last breath he had begged the boy "to be good to his little sister." The two had been living for some weeks together in miserable rooms for which they paid $8.00 a month, while their combined earnings were $4.50 a week. The little girl was not committed as a thief but because of mal-nutrition and neglect. She was sent to an institution in the country, where she could get some of the fresh air and wholesome food that she needed to bring back the flesh and color to her parchment covered face.

"Oh, Judge," the boy had pleaded, the tears streaking his grimy face, "she ain't a bad girl; she won't steal again. Please let her go and

I'll take good care of her." It happened it was the Judge himself who went to that home and who became the Big Brother. It was Judge Franklin C. Hoyt, one of the Children's Court Judges of New York, and who hears twice as many children's cases in one year as any other Children's Court Judge in the world. But he realized the value of the personal element in such work. Yes, and so keen was his interest in it that it was not long before he was one of the leaders of the Big Brothers.

Wholesome food was obtained for the lad. Decent clothes were put on his back and within forty-eight hours he was working at a job where he received twice as much pay as the combined earnings of the two had been before. It was not long before that boy had a little bank account which he cherished and hoarded toward the day when he was able to bring his little sister back to a neat home. And what a happy day that was!

The call of another Big Brother took him into a three-room tenement in West 53rd Street the day before Christmas. It had been an act of

boyish mischief that got Edward into court, and as it turned out, his début there was probably the luckiest happening of his life. His father was dead and the family was frightfully poor. As the Big Brother afterwards described the visit:

"The mother, a stout, respectable Swedish woman, was deep in the mysteries of preparing a pie, the first, she confessed to me, they had had in a year. The kitchen was full of neighbors and neighbors' children, but she greeted me with a hearty smile and a warm, damp handshake. Yes, Eddie was a good boy — most boys are paragons to their mothers if they amount to anything — couldn't I get him a 'yob?' I told her I would try but I wanted to get him a pair of shoes first, for I noticed that Eddie wore a pair of men's shoes many sizes too large for him, one of them split entirely across the toe and both worn through until his feet were practically on the ground. The mother's gratitude was loud and voluble and when I left she gave me a hearty pat on the back that left a large imprint of a flour-covered palm,

and wished me all kinds of luck and a Merry Christmas. She said Edward would meet me that afternoon.

"It was quite cold when Edward reported at my office. He was without an overcoat, but wore a thin, light, summer suit, no vest, a torn calico shirt without collar, and then those awful shoes. He was indeed a picture of misery and was conscious of his wretched, ludicrous appearance. As I put on my warm overcoat to go with him, I felt guilty and ashamed that I should be so warmly clad when this poor little soul needed so much. We first stopped to buy some socks, for the boy had told me shamefacedly that his socks were so full of holes, he would not like to take his shoes off to have the new ones tried on.

"'But say,' he suddenly suggested, seeking a way out of the dilemma, 'just get a pair of shoes about half as long as these I have got on and they'll be all right. They won't have to see the socks.'

"But no, I said, we would have the socks, and we bought them. At the elevated station on the way to the shoe store, Edward again showed his

resourcefulness, for he disappeared into the waiting room and when he emerged, he wore a wide smile and said, 'I've got them on all right.' At the shoe store, the boy was quickly fitted and when the salesman asked me whether we wished to take the old ones home with us, I thought he meant to be sarcastic and so with a benevolent air, I replied, 'No, you may keep them.' Edward had many a collision as we walked up Sixth Avenue, for he could not keep his eyes straight. He was constantly watching those shoes.

"I did not have very much money myself but another Big Brother had given me $5.00 to help out and I bethought myself of a pawn shop over on Tenth Avenue, where they had unredeemed pledges. Soon Edward was fitted with a coat and vest as good as new which originally must have cost about $8.00, but I bargained with the man until I got it down to $3.00. As I paid for them, Edward heaved a sigh of relief. I had noticed that he was getting nervous during the bargaining, fearing the pawn-broker and myself would not come to terms. It was more difficult to find trousers for him, for his waist was so

slim and he had legs like a young colt, but we finally got a pair for a dollar. As we again walked up the avenue, Edward slipped his hand into mine, and glanced up at me with sparkling eyes; 'Gee, I'm a regular dude now.'

"When the boy called on me the next day, he fairly danced about the room. It surely was the happiest Christmas morning he had ever known. He was transformed from a little shivering starveling into a bright, happy boy, a real boy conscious of his altered appearance. The following Monday I was able to find work for Edward, for he now made a good appearance in his new outfit. All this for $6.75. When Edward made good on his job and turned his money over to his mother each week, I certainly concluded it had been a good investment. And I still think so when I look at him to-day."

These were merely the starting incidents. Chapters might be written about the visits into the other tenements. There were some discouragements, of course, but most of the men realized from the start that they have undertaken a man's job and came to take a keen personal

pleasure in the progress they made with their cases. It had been agreed at the start that there was to be nothing of preaching or lecturing, and above all no patronizing. It was to be suggestion rather than platitude. Then, too, the mention of Children's Court was tabooed. The men apparently did not know there was such a place.

Some months after most of the men had succeeded in establishing relations of confidence with their Little Brothers, they decided to experiment in bringing their boys together for a little dinner. It was indeed a notable affair. There was Mickey, and beside him his friend, a well-known banker; Spike, who sat next to his host, a famous architect; Chink, who graciously accepted his Big Brother, although he did wear the cloth, and other just as interesting personages. The attempts that the boys had made to appear good in the eyes of their Big Brothers were interesting indeed. For instance, there was a little fellow who could not afford the luxury of a clean shirt, but whose mother at the last moment had hastily washed and ironed a hand-

kerchief and pinned it across the place where the shirt ought to be. Countenances had been scoured until they shown.

One youngster came fairly redolent in the luxury of cheap perfume. Noting my look of surprise when I caught the odor, he tugged my coat-sleeve and motioned me to a corner. When we were safely out of the hearing of the crowd, he eagerly asked:

"Ain't it great; I got it at de corner drug store fer a nickel!"

It was great I assure you.

These were all mighty good signs. It showed that at least the first important step had been taken toward the making of good citizens; these lads were developing self-respect. The boys had been told that they would be expected to respond to a toast and had selected a spokesman. He had carefully written out a speech and tucked it under his cup, whence I rescued it later and I shall give part of it verbatim:

Gentlemen and Friends:— We cannot retaliate your favors at present by inviting you to dinners, but we can by

becoming men of whom you can look in the future and say with pride: 'He used to be one of the boys of our club.' As you know, I am not much of a speaker which I do not pretend to be. I close with three cheers, one for the men's club, one for the boys' club and one for our country.

That boy afterwards occupied a position of trust in a big bank, and to-day his Big Brother has him in a most important post in his employ.

A work as productive as this was bound to grow. It not only developed the boys, but it broadened the men into better, bigger citizens. Men in other church clubs, in alumni, business and social organizations were anxious to have a part in it.

The work has never been cumbered with red tape, but it was necessary finally to have a Board of Directors. When a man was accepted as a Big Brother he was asked to pledge his word that he would show the boy who was sent to him that there really was someone who cared and who was anxious to help him over the rough places. So far as possible, an effort was always made to find a boy who lived in a neighborhood

not too remote from the man, so it would not be too difficult for them to visit back and forth. A general secretary was employed and to him each man was requested to report, at stated intervals, regarding the progress of his case. Of course, every boy did not develop into a paragon of virtue. At best they were boys, not angels. But it was found at the end of the first year that only three per cent. of the lads who had Big Brothers, again got back into the Children's Court. The freedom from red tape, from set rules, from big salary budgets and staffs of paid philanthropists, all had much to do with developing this work to the great proportions it has assumed to-day. It was necessary, of course, to use discretion in selecting the individual man for the individual boy. In time it was decided that before a man could finally be accepted as a Big Brother he should not only pass other preliminary requirements, but should prove that after three months' experience he was making satisfactory progress with his boy. Promiscuous charity giving has ever been discouraged, and the rule has been for the Big Brother not

to give financial aid to a boy, except for value received. For instance, when money was given to a lad for a new suit of clothes, frequently he was told that he would be expected to repay this by working after school or in vacation time. So this lad's pride finally was not only in a new suit, but in the fact that he had been able to earn it through his own, honest work.

Wherever it has been possible, existing institutions have been used to help in the Big Brother work. It has not been necessary for the Big Brothers to build big plants and put fortunes into shells of brick and mortar. The feeling has been that the existing agencies should be more fully utilized. And so permission has been obtained to use church and other gymnasiums which otherwise would more often than not have remained dark at night. This same plan has been followed, too, in utilizing boys' camps in the summer, to which those Little Brothers who were in greatest need of good air, food and play space, could be sent to banish some of the anæmia from their stunted bodies. How successful this has been is attested by the fact that the average gain

per boy in one camp last summer, was six pounds.

To one of these camps "Dutch De Barrel Crook" was sent with quite a company of other Little Brothers last summer. Now, Dutch perhaps did not need to get away from the city streets for physical reasons, but he was about ripe for a reformatory, and his Big Brother realized that he was in critical need of a change from the pavements. Dutch got his name from the wonderful facility with which he could send an empty barrel spinning across a sidewalk from in front of a fruit or vegetable stand. With one dexterous twist of the wrist he would send a barrel whirling on edge out into the street, when two of his companions would come flying along, grab it up and disappear around the corner with it before the stand owner realized what had happened. These boys had barrels stacked high in a vacant lot and were conducting a profitable business when they were caught. It was by the narrowest chance that Dutch escaped going to an institution and was given a chance on probation.

It was here that the Big Brother entered.

Dutch had been quite a bruiser. In fact, in his unregenerate days he would rather fight than eat. His head and face bore many scars of past battles.

The wonders of nature were all new to Dutch when he got into the country. He was one of the boys who had never before been off Manhattan Island. Dutch's Big Brother took two weeks of his vacation to accompany him to camp. The boy came to him one day and exhibited a trifling cut in his knee which to Dutch would have amounted ordinarily to less than a pin scratch:

"I got a bad cut, Mr. Brown," said Dutch. Mr. Brown scarcely looked at it, not realizing the psychological significance of the plea.

"Why, just sit down there," said the Big Brother, "and take a feather and tickle that scratch long enough and it will heal right up."

And Mr. Brown went hurrying off with a crowd of boys for a tramp across the fields. What was his astonishment when he returned to see Dutch, the bruiser, sitting under a tree patiently, but industriously, tickling his scratched

These youngsters only a few months before were anaemic physically and morally. Their life at the Big Brother Farm has wrought the transformation

knee with a feather. The boy had thus been engaged for an hour. He saw the look of amused wonder on the face of the Big Brother. He flew into a rage: "You ain't been on the level wid me," he exclaimed, "I t'ot you was on the square. It's all off between me and you and I'm goin' home."

It was a long time before that Big Brother succeeded in straightening things out with Dutch. It was the first time he had realized that the "barrel crook" had taken his every word as golden truth. The Big Brother had to make profuse apologies, and even then it was several days before the two got back to their old status.

Dutch is doing splendidly to-day. He has a good job, is going to night school, and recently he has taken to studying Shakespeare. He came into my office not long ago with an essay on Hamlet. I do not pretend to be a Shakespearean scholar, but I do say that that essay would make most Shakespearean scholars sit up and take notice. I learned things about Hamlet that I had never known before.

One big hearted Big Brother who has never

revealed his name to the public recently gave a farm to the Movement. It is a fertile and picturesque tract of 230 acres on the slopes of the Delaware River at Stockton, N. J. Here some of the boys who have no homes and have been mothered only by the streets are sent. The change that comes over them is almost miraculous. The first group were stunted in mind and body when sent to the country but in the wholesome surroundings they are developing into splendid young men. The neighbors had viewed the "street gamins" with dread when they first appeared in Stockton. To-day those boys are the pride of the community. Nearly all are destined to become successful farmers, artisans or business men.

In all this work of the Big Brothers, personal relationship has been the king-pin. Its whole success has been due to the personal equation as expressed between the man and the boy. How successful this has been is attested by the fact that the original Big Brother organization of New York County last year looked after 2,883 boys, with the result that less than three per cent.

of them again got back into the Children's Court. There are other Big Brother organizations; in New York the Jewish Big Brothers and the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Association that are doing just as effective work. As was indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this movement has spread, until it is now being followed in one way or another in more than forty cities in this country.

But someone will say, what about the girls? Well, the girls are being looked after too, for within the past two years a similar work which is known as the Big Sisters has been established through the personal efforts and untiring devotion of Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt. The women who are engaged in this work are giving the same sort of personal attention and help to the girls that have been extended to the boys, and with results that have been equally good. For that old notion that you cannot do anything for a girl who has made a misstep, is being found to be narrow, selfish and unjustified. It has been ignorance and prejudice chiefly that have caused men and women to look askance at the child, and

especially the girl, who has been in trouble. We are learning day by day that the chief trouble has not been with the child, but with ourselves.

The chief tenet in the faith of the Big Brothers and the Big Sisters, is that the condition of the tenement child is not of his own making. Whether he is to become a friend and helper, or an enemy of the State, rests largely with his neighbor. He is in a formative state and easily molded.

If you believe that a child in the open is better than a child in jail you are in sympathy with the movement. If you believe that a child unaided cannot always overcome the tendency of unfortunate environment or be happy and of use without any of the things which make for happiness and usefulness, you concur in the platform. If you are willing to do something yourself to help a child who needs it, and take some of life's handicap off his underfed body and undeveloped mind, you are doing a service worth while.

The profits of such a work run big to the children, to the men and women who engage in it, and to the future citizenship of the country.

CHAPTER XIV

THE AWAKENING

IN the rich and jeweled gloom of St. Mark's in Venice, there burns a perpetual light. It is not that of votive candle set before some pictured saint, nor the light which shows the presence of the Host, nor that of the seven lamps which are the seven spirits of God always burning before the throne, but only the memorial to a little child whose life was sacrificed by a community's mistake.

Beneath one of the windows looking toward the sea the flickering remembrance has burned four hundred years. A man was killed; evidence pointed to a boy as his murderer and he was quickly condemned and executed. After death the child's innocence was proved and the Venetians placed this light in the church for a perpetual remembrance of the innocence it had wronged.

No long, dark past is ours and yet what innocence have we too sacrificed by our social mistakes, what aspirations, what hopes, what splendid possibilities have we not killed in our dealings with the child. We can put up no lights in warning or remembrance, we can only try for reparation in our future work and in an ever-tended and undying flame of zeal and devotion to the children of to-day in our remorseless streets.

It is one of the happy signs of the moment that in our fiction and in our intercourse one hears constantly the note of unrest caused by the thought of other people's unhappiness. Our imagination is being awakened and reaches beyond the physical to that moral suffering which so often is far worse. Our divine discontent comes not only from our own condition but also from that of our neighbors; and this, fortunately, is being felt by the rich as well as the poor. We are daily growing more impatient with palliatives, with the little, tinkering methods which may by good luck help Lizzie Jones out of her difficulties to-day but which do nothing to make

it impossible for the same conditions to entrap all future Lizzies. It is convenient to have some agency to which to refer the case of destitution which comes to our door, but what are we doing to make such poverty impossible? Our great sin of the past has been social irresponsibility. But we are becoming insistent now on something more than philanthropy's sentimental side. We want to reach to the roots of all the evils with which our chapters have dealt.

We have seen that all sorts of reasons are given why our neighbor and his child must live in dark, unclean, exorbitantly costly tenements. They may be summed up in one word — greed. Some landlords ease their consciences by calling it business. But we have seen what costly business this is to the community. Those tenement owners whose names appear on the subscription lists of roof camps and sanitaria and who at the same time support the lobby which defeats legislation that would let air into their black tenement rooms, now the chief recruiting places for consumption, are at last beginning to feel the inconsistency if not the shame of their po-

sition. It has been these same owners who in the past have fought hardest against having their names placed over the doors of their rookeries. How hard it is to get away from the immediate dollar mark! It was when the Master of Men drove the money changers from the Temple that they began to talk of him as a dangerous man.

Good tenements and fair living wages will come when we as a community have determined upon them. Then the children will have a fair growing chance. A physician who has worked much among the poor said to us recently: "The scientist has solved his end of the problem — tuberculosis is entirely in the hands of the community. It is wholly a question of air, diet and sufficient rest. If the poor man has not these at command, the choice is before the community to see that he has them or to take the consequences. For no man is imperiled alone."

The choice in every case is before the community. As we have followed the troubles that come to the Children's Courts out to their source we reach a very definite conclusion about reme-

dies and what could so promptly be done were we of one mind in the community. Our desire and our determination are what count. The best child labor laws in the world are for the child but half the solution. Unless we give the parent enough return for his labor to support his family we have done little more in regulating the legal age for labor than to say: "It is bad for the child to use unformed muscles; therefore it is better he should starve."

The community can see to it that supply reaches demand, that the piracy that now intervenes between producer and consumer is wiped out. The Government too can direct the immigrant stream, can see that the immigrant is informed of actual conditions and that he moves on to the places where there is opportunity for his labor. Much is to be done for the conservation of the health and lives of the workers. As one great manufacturer and legislator, who has suddenly awakened, is now pointing out: "In the factories we have failed to treat the human element in production in the intelligent manner in which the mechanical is treated." The machines

have carefully been protected from dust but what has been done to protect the operators from tuberculosis? But social conscience is being aroused in that direction, too.

Within the past ten years there have been many profit sharing schemes. Some have survived and some are dead, yet this is one of the opportunities of the future which cannot fail of great development. Whatever may be said of the value of capital and brains on the one side and labor on the other, we are beginning to realize that the present ratio of reward is manifestly unfair when we consider all the human lives engaged in hard, unhealthy and often dangerous occupations.

But the forces of good will are gradually combining to stop human waste. The churches are awakening to the truth that religion means relationship, social service. The saving of bodies and souls must go hand in hand. Tardily the dry discussion of man-made dogma is being abandoned and we are getting down to divine, simple truths. There are few conceptions of practical philanthropy not implicit in religion

when we cease circling it and go to its heart.

When we look at the children dancing in the little make-believe parks or on the occasional recreation piers that have been opened to them at night, and at their elders with the lines of care momentarily lightened on their faces, we cannot but realize what even a fragment of a chance means to our neighbor and his child. This is of happier promise than the light that was lit four hundred years ago. We go away convinced that every pier should have its music at night and its joyful, dancing little army. Surely lights are being kindled to-day that will in time bring the children out of the shadow. It is for us to tend and feed the flame.

Perhaps Ellen Keys has best summed up our feelings for our neighbor's child when she speaks of the great future movement of liberty that "shall bring the children's declaration of rights and make an end of their spiritual and bodily ill-treatment, which must appear to the future as monstrous as negro slavery does to us."